The MESSIAH

DAVID McCONAUGHY

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THE MESSIAH

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By
DAVID McCONAUGHY
Author of "Leaves from a Worker's Note-book"

PART ONE—Studies in the Gospel of the Kingdom
PART TWO—Devotional Meditations on the Same

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FOREWORD

THIS study of the Gospel of the Kingdom is intended to be suggestive, rather than in any sense exhaustive. Part I aims to clearly trace the outlines of the peerless portrait of the Messiah as depicted by Matthew. The material is more especially designed to be of use to Christians who are already somewhat familiar with the contents of Matthew's Gospel. It is arranged so as to be either read continuously or taken up in course in daily studies, individually, with a weekly review, unitedly. For this purpose, divisions by days are indicated in Part I, which however may be changed at pleasure. Points for review are also suggested at the close of each chapter, for guidance in class work. Part I lends itself more especially to the Bible Class, dealing with the structure and the thought; Part II to the Bible Circle, having to do rather with the spiritual truths and their personal application to life. In Part II are given Devotional Meditations, adapted to use in the Quiet Hour. It is not intended that the material of the first day in Part II should be taken up in connection with that of the first day in Part I and so consecutively. Probably the best results may be obtained from Part II after the material of Part I has been thoroughly mastered.

In the Meditations the main aim has been to illustrate a method, simple yet sufficient to yield substantial results to the ordinary disciple who, from lack of some such plan of utilizing to advantage fragments of time for Bible study, may fail to obtain day by day the daily portion of the

Bread of Life which his soul requires. The plan which is here applied has been proven practicable and productive by busy men of business and by students in the schools, as well as by those in whose lives there is more of leisure.

Should these pages serve to show forth any more clearly the King in His beauty and incite to more diligent study and personal appropriation of His Word, the purpose will have been accomplished.

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PART FIRST

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

STUDY I

INTRODUCTORY

First Day.—Four Evangelists, but One Evangel.

"Surely one star above all souls shall brighten,
Leading forever where the Lord is laid;
One revelation through all years enlighten
Steps of bewilderment and eyes afraid."

WHOEVER would understand what the gospel contains, must gain the vantage-ground from which each of the four writers under the guidance of the one divine Author presents the inspired, composite portrait of the Christ.

It is said that when a statue of Charles the First, of England, was to be carved, the sculptor was furnished with three portraits of the king by Van Dyke. Before John gave to the world the wondrous life-sized figure of the Son of God, three portraits were first drawn, each from a different standpoint and with a distinct purpose, by Matthew, Mark and Luke. To get a clear vision of the wonderful Person as presented by any one of these, it is necessary, first, to get the point of view of each. For while there are four evangelists, there is but one Evangel—as four photographs, presenting one composite likeness of the God-man; four trumpets,[1] summoning the Church from all the four winds; four steeds,[2] drawing the triumphal car of Christ; four parts of music[3] which may be sung separately, but together blend in the harmony of a quar-

[1] Augustine. [2] Calvin. [3] Bengell.

tette; four streams, as the rivers[1] in Eden flowing out to irrigate the whole earth; four living creatures,[2] each presenting a diversity of aspects but perfect unity of action.

Second Day.—Matthew's Place Among the Evangelists.

The Books of Jesus in the New Testament correspond to those of Moses in the Old. As Deuteronomy is mainly composed of the messages from Jehovah through Moses, so John's gospel is largely made up of the words of Jesus. In this gospel are focussed the numerous prophecies of the Christ that appear throughout the Old Testament.

The three Synoptists, writing in the sixth or seventh decade of the first century from the outward and earthly side, taking a view of our Lord's life in perspective, give us the gospel of the infant Church, while John, writing probably in the last decade of that century, and confining attention mainly to the Judean ministry and particularly to the closing events, gives from the inward and heavenly standpoint, the gospel of the Church after she has been tried as by fire.

Matthew masses the material in a topical way. The evidence of design is to be seen in the structure of the book throughout. The literary quality of the production is remarkable and the work cannot be accounted for on merely natural grounds. This "holy man" manifestly wrote as he was "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1 : 21).

Of Matthew about all that is known is this: that his father's name was Alpheus, that he was himself a publican, or collector of taxes, that he was called to be a dis-

[1] Jerome.
[2] Ezekiel (Ezek. 1 : 10; 10 : 14); John (Rev. 4 : 7).

ciple of Christ, that thereupon "he forsook all" Luke 5 : 28), that his name was changed from Levi ("Associated") to Matthew ("Given"). There is not a comment of his own recorded in the gospel.

It is not known what became of him, where he preached or how he died. It is generally agreed that he wrote his record of the gospel in Hebrew; yet the opinion of Erasmus is commonly accepted, that our Greek version of it is no translation; so that probably he wrote in both Hebrew and Greek.

A COMPARATIVE SURVEY

Showing the characteristics of each

		Written	*Matthew*
Third Day.	*By* whom?		A Hebrew
	For whom?		The Hebrew
	Where?		Palestine
	When?		50–60
Fourth Day.	*Why?*		
	1. To show Christ as		King (mainly) King of the Jews Christ's claim on man
	2. Symbols (Rev. 4:7)		The Lion (Rev. 5:5) overcoming
	Genealogy		Son of David (from Abraham)
Fifth Day.	*How?*		
	Salient features:		Topical, Consecutive Miracle
	Opens with:		Genealogy
	Closes with:		The Resurrection and Command
	Key words:		"Kingdom of Heaven" (32 times) "Kingdom" of God (3 times) "King" (22 times)
	Analogies to the plan of the Temple:		Court of Israel
	Writer's monogram:		"A Publican" at the receipt of customs (10:3)

A COMPARATIVE SURVEY (*continued*)

of the four versions of the Gospel

Mark	*Luke*	*John*
A Roman	A Greek	A Cosmopolitan
The Roman	The Greek	The World
Rome	Cæsarea	Ephesus
About 60	57–63	About 97
Priest and Levite	Prophet	The Word made flesh
Servant of God and man	The wisdom of God	The incarnation of God
Man's claim on Christ	Christ's relation to man	Man's relation to God through Christ
Ox (ministering before, then offered upon, the altar)	Man	Eagle
	Sympathizing and helping	Soaring
Toiling and dying		
(No Genealogy)	Son of Adam (from Nathan)	Son of God "Was God"
Chronological, Concise	Classical, Copious	Theological, Vivid
Action	Parable	Discourse
"My messenger"	Angel's announcement	"In the beginning"
The Ascension and obedience to the Command	Benediction and promise of enduement	Promise of the Second Coming
"Straightway" (of 80 times in the New Testament, here 40)	"A certain man," "wept"	"Believe" (98)
		"Witness" (47)
		"I am" (10)
		"Verily, Verily" (22)
"Took," "Touched,"		"Love" (12)
"Looked," "Power"		"Life" (22)
		"Glory" (15)
Of the Priests	Of the Gentiles	The Holy of Holies
The youth who fled, leaving his linen cloth (14 : 51)	The companion of Cleopas on the way to Emmaus (24 : 18)	"One of His disciples whom Jesus loved" (13 : 23)

Sixth Day.—The Plan.

The plan of Matthew's gospel, while not obtruding itself upon the surface, is in fact laid with the skill of a literary artist. It is only after patient examination that the outline appears, all perfectly articulated and presenting a perfect portrait of the Messiah. The details are exquisite in finish and will bear the closest study.

To begin with, note the main lines of cleavage, marked by the formula, "From that time began Jesus": (4: 17) "to preach"; (16: 21) "to show unto His disciples that He must . . . suffer . . . and be raised." Thus the ground-plan of the book comes into view, depicting the Messiah in His threefold office:

I. (1: 1–4: 11.)

His Preparation as King.

II. (4: 12–16: 12.)

His Progress as Prophet.

III. (16 : 13–28 : 20.)

His
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Seventh Day.—A Working Method.[1]

If the division into chapters seems in some cases to be arbitrary or artificial, wherever violence is thus done to the sequence of thought, it is better not to adhere to this division. But, in the main, it will be found satisfactory to work by chapters, taking a title for each, to serve as a handle to get hold of the contents, so as to recall the thread of thought and make it possible to think through the book connectedly, afterwards.

In order to master the contents of a chapter or paragraph, several steps are essential and these may be very briefly indicated as follows :

(1) The THOUGHT, or what it *tells*.
(2) The TRUTH, or what it *teaches*.
(3) The TEXT, or what to *take*.
(4) The TITLE, or what to *term* it.
(1) Read the portion and write down in the fewest

[1] Part II affords illustration of this method throughout.

possible words (as for a telegram) the gist of it, looking carefully for the current of the THOUGHT.

(2) Go over the passage again, with eyes open to note the principal points of the TRUTHS there contained.

(3) Dwell upon these prayerfully with a view to determining what is especially intended as a message at the time for yourself and seize upon that verse or clause or word as your golden TEXT, memorizing it and recalling it throughout the day.

(4) If possible, select from the text of the chapter itself a key-word which will best serve to recall the contents, tracing over the letters and enclosing it with lines so as to make it stand out upon the page as the chapter TITLE.

Now turn into prayer the truth that has gripped you and then proceed to *translate it into your very life* throughout the day.

This plan may be termed The 4–T Method.

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY I

INTRODUCTORY

First Day.—Why Four Gospels?

Are there really four?

To what may they be likened?

Seek to ascertain the exact standpoint of each of the four writers.

See the symbols given in Rev. 4:7; compare those of Ezek. 1:10; 10:14.

Second Day.—Matthew's Place Among the Evangelists.

With what books of the Old Testament do those of the four evangelists compare?

Why are the first three distinguished as "the Synoptists"?
What, exactly, does the term mean?
What is known of Matthew?

Third Day.—A Comparative Survey of the Gospels.

Master the material contained in the summary, including the salient facts as to the authorship of each; by whom, for whom, where and when each was written.

Fourth Day.—The Writer's Standpoint.

Turning again to the summary, grasp the points as to *why* Matthew wrote, in comparison or in contrast with the others, determining the point of view of each writer and noting the words and phrases peculiar to Matthew.

Fifth Day.—The Writer's Style.

Note especially *how* Matthew wrote as compared with the others, his special characteristics; what feature predominates? With what does the book open? With what does it close?

Mark the key-words and how often each occurs.

Sixth Day.—The Plan of the Book.

Find the main lines of cleavage, indicated by the formula: "From that time began Jesus," which is introduced in each case by a brief paragraph marking the time referred to.

What three phases of the Messiah are presented in the three great divisions of the Book?

Note, also, the formula, "It came to pass when Jesus had finished," which subdivides the second section at 7:28; 11:1 and 13:53; also the third section at 19:1 and 26:1.

In the last instance, why is the word "all" inserted?

Seventh Day.—A Working Method.

If the truth contained in this book is to be assimilated into the heart-life, it must first be appropriated through the head. What method will you adopt, which will be at once simple and sufficient to realize the result desired?

What are the four main points in this plan, to be applied in the study of each portion?

[*See Part II for a practical application of this method.*]

STUDY II

HIS PREPARATION—AS KING

1 : 1–4 : 11.

"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."

First Day.—Prophecy Fulfilled: His Nature and Names.

A COPY of the Constitution of the United States of America has been so engrossed that the arrangement and shading of the letters bring out in bold relief the portrait of George Washington. In a somewhat similar way, in the Gospel by Matthew, may be seen portrayed the Messiah—King and Prophet and Priest—for whose appearing the ages had waited. In Jesus Christ more than three hundred distinct prophecies converge and find fulfillment. The Coming One, moving majestically down through the centuries, foreseen at first but faintly by seer and prophet, at length draws near to men. The shadows cast before Him shorten more and more until at length He appears in person, although scarce recognized by any until after He has accomplished His mission and passed out. In the shadow-pictures of Him which appear in the Old Testament, even as in the art galleries of modern times, two types of portrait are presented—the "Ecce Homo" and the "Ecce Deus." The Jew chose to see in Him mainly, if not only, the conquering King, who would subdue all nations under His sceptre. The Christian, on the contrary, looks chiefly at the other set of pictures and sees Him as the Priest offering Himself up as a sacrifice for sin, the suffering Saviour. The Roman and the Greek branches of the Christian Church emphasize this latter view by the

symbol of the Cross, while the Protestant presses the truth of the Atonement in a system of doctrine which scarcely preserves a due proportion between the two hemispheres of the Truth. For although that relating to the death of the Saviour cannot be emphasized too much, it may be pressed too exclusively, to the neglect of that which has to do with His resurrection life, and the work of the Holy Spirit and the coming glory of the King. In the Scriptures, however, there is set forth, in perfect symmetry, the portrait of the Messiah, at once Priest and King, and also, the Prophet who proclaims the real relation between the two.

This long-looked for Coming One fulfills all the conditions foretold as to:

(1) *His Nature:*

Human. He is to be the Seed of a woman (Gen. 3:15, with Luke 2:7, Gal. 4:4). Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, with Luke 2:4–7); of a Virgin (Is. 7:14 with Matt. 1:21–23); of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3, with Gal. 3:16); Isaac (Gen. 21:12, with Luke 3:34); Jacob (Gen. 28:14, with Matt. 1:2); Judah (Gen. 49:10, with Heb. 7:14). Of the family of Jesse (Is. 11:1, 10, with Matt. 1:5); David (2 Sam. 7, 12, with Luke 1:31–33).

Divine. Begotten of Jehovah (Ps. 2:7, with Matt. 17:5); Jehovah's "fellow" (Zech. 13:7, with Phil. 2:6). His name (among others) is "Mighty God" (Is. 9:6, with Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13). He is shown to be the Son of God with power by His rising from the dead (Matt. 28:6, 7).

These two natures perfectly blend in Him who is at once the Son of Man and the Son of God,

"Jesus, divinest when Thou most art man."

(2) *His Names :*
Branch, the (Is. 11 : 1).
Father of Eternity (Is. 9 : 6, R. V. Margin).
Governor (Mic. 5:2, with Matt. 2:6).
High Priest (Heb. 7 : 26).
Holy One (Ps. 16 : 10).
Immanuel (Is. 7 : 14).
Jehovah our Righteousness (Jer. 23 : 6; 33 : 16).
Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3 : 1).
Messiah (Dan. 9 : 25).
Mighty God (Is. 9 : 6).
Prince of Peace (Is. 9 : 6).
Redeemer (Is. 41 : 14; 59 : 20).
Wonderful Counsellor (Is. 9 : 6).

Second Day.—His Offices.

(1) *Prophet:*

"Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me," Moses was assured of God; "unto Him ye shall hearken. . . . And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18 : 15–19, with Acts 3 : 22).

More than fifteen centuries afterwards, Moses, along with Elijah, was allowed to see that Word fulfilled amid the glory of the Transfiguration. "And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, My chosen, hear ye Him" (Luke 9 : 35).

At length this Prophet, so long foretold, appears in the synagogue of Nazareth, and "the eyes of all . . . were fastened on Him," as He opened unto them the

Scriptures, and they "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4: 16–22). Not only Herod (Luke 9: 7–19) but many others in those days were perplexed, and asked whether this One were Elijah, or "the Prophet" or who He might be (John 1: 21).

(2) *Priest:*

"He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6: 13). "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110: 4). "So Christ, also, glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that spake unto Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee; as He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5: 5–10).

And this Priest in due time, offered Himself a sacrifice for sinners. "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. By the knowledge of Himself shall my Righteous Servant justify many, and He shall bear their infirmities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, yet he

was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Is. 53:10–12).

(3) *King:*

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor the Ruler from between His feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49: 8–12). He is to be of the lineage of David (Jer. 23: 5; 30: 9; 33: 15–18).

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He *shall reign as King* and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness" (Jer. 23: 5). "The Creator of Israel, your King" (Is. 43: 15). "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. . . . Ask of me and *I* will give thee the heathen" (Ps. 2: 6). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea" (Ps. 72: 8). "I have laid upon One that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people . . . have found and anointed Him . . . established . . . shall strengthen . . . will set His hand also, on the sea and His right hand on the rivers. . . . I will make Him My first-born, *the highest of the kings of the earth.* His seed shall endure forever and His throne as the sun before me" (Ps. 89: 25–27).

"I beheld till thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was fiery flames and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. Thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. . . . I saw in the night visions and behold there came with the

clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of man and he came even to the ancient of days and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7 : 9–14).

He is described as "the Prince of Peace" (Is. 9 : 6), "the Anointed One, the Prince" (Dan. 9 : 25), "the Ruler of Israel" (Micah 5 : 2). "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. . . . And He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9 : 9, 10, cf. Matt. 21 : 1–11). "And the government shall be upon His shoulder. . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (no frontier. Is. 9 : 6, 7).

Third Day.—The Royal Title Traced (1 : 1–17).

The title of the King is clearly traced back along the line of royalty, so that His claim is indisputably established. Matthew's record differs from Luke's in several particulars. While Luke starts at the head of the human race in Adam and traces the line down from the source, Matthew follows the stream up only to the point where the regal line begins with Abraham, the Friend of God. Then, too, Matthew follows the *legal* line of descent through Joseph's father, Jacob, while Luke follows the *natural* line through Heli, or Eli, the father of Mary.

Thus the genealogy is traced back along both lines to David, where they merge in a common stock, making assurance doubly sure, that Jesus is beyond all question "Great David's greater Son," not alone legally through his adopted father, but naturally, too, through his mother. Thus is furnished the key to the puzzle which Jesus put to the Pharisees (Matt. 22 : 41), how He could be at once both Son and Lord.

The division into three sections of fourteen genealogies each is not exact, for between Joram and Uzziah in the second section, three kings are omitted, as is Jehoiakim at the end of the second section. Even so, it is with almost rhythmical measure that the procession of human life moves down the centuries under the divine direction, laws of heredity and environment alike conspiring towards the fruition of the Coming Seed. The preservation of a male line unbroken through so many centuries is in itself a marvellous proof of divine direction. No "fortuitous concourse of atoms" can account for such coincidence. Here is nothing less than divine design in human history.

In this procession appear five women, as if to emphasize the fact that the Coming One was to be "born of a woman" (Gal. 4 : 4). Again and again appears "the bar sinister" upon the escutcheon of this royal line, showing the curse which He had voluntarily assumed; three of these women are under a cloud of shame.

At length the promise made so long before to Abraham is fulfilled,—"I will bless thee . . . and be thou a blessing and I will bless them that bless thee . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12 : 23). "The father of a *multitude of nations* have I made thee" (Gen. 17 : 5). "In thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22 : 18).

The promise to David is, likewise, to be fulfilled, "I will set up thy seed after thee . . . and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7 : 12, 13; Psalm 89 : 4). In the Annunciation to Mary, this promise is specifically recalled, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son and shalt call His name Jesus," and "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David!" and "He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (no frontier. Luke 1 : 32). Since the first part of this prophecy has been fulfilled literally, is it not reasonable to expect that the latter shall be no less literally fulfilled?

Fourth Day.—His Birth (1 : 18–25).

"Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall,
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all."

Before the mystery of the Incarnation we well may pause with bated breath, beholding the Son of God become the Son of Man, in order that we the sons of men, may become the sons of God. Can even the cross of Calvary be regarded as more marvellous than the manger of Bethlehem?

The Incarnation transcends all human thinking, but it is incredible only to him who leaves God out altogether. Every birth is a miracle; not one can be fully accounted for. The conception of the Christ is the supreme miracle of its class and this is only what, in the very nature of the case, was to have been expected. Yet it has been said that "for God to bring a Saviour into the world by any other than the gateway of natural birth, would constitute the despair of God." Rather did man's despair of ever

seeing a Saviour come in the natural course, become God's opportunity to bring in a better hope by His own supernatural way. And, to the end of time, the same supernatural power of the Spirit of God which operated in Mary to produce the body of our Lord, works in the soul of the believer, to produce the new birth.

The name given to the Son of God by which He should be known on earth could not but be selected with reference to its significance. Jesus (Luke 2 : 21), the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Joshua," signifies that *Jehovah is the Saviour for all.* "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Messiah," the Anointed Servant of God. "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7 : 14), "God with us," is the broad term that covers the meaning of both of these terms.

Fifth Day.—Royal Homage and a Royal Rival (2).

"Kings from a far land, draw near and behold Him,
Led by the star whose brightness bade ye come;
Your crowns cast down, with robe royal enfold Him,
Your King descends to earth from brighter home."

It was part of the divine plan that the Christ should be born in royal David's City, as Micah had foretold (Micah 5 : 2), more than 700 years before. And towards this far-off divine event, everything converged with undeviating precision. Around the cradle of the Christ there were gathered the representatives of all classes, not alone the unlettered shepherds, but, likewise, the literati, not only men of the Chosen People who "were intrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom. 3 : 2), the "living oracles" (Acts 7 : 38), but also those who represented the ethnic religions of the Orient, Gentiles as well as Jews. Indeed they who were not of Israel, were to be the first to worship Him who

was to "reign over the House of Jacob forever" (Luke 1 : 33). Around the cradle of the Christ was gathered the first Parliament of Religions.

God has many methods of communicating with men. To the simple Jewish shepherds, "an angel of the Lord" appears with explicit announcement of the time and place of the Saviour's advent (Luke 2 : 9); to "the wise men from the East," who are without a written revelation, He speaks, at first, through the medium of nature, by "the star" (Matt. 2 : 2); and, later, when, following the light of nature, they have been led to the clearer light of revelation, God comes closer and speaks to them "in a dream" (Matt. 2 : 12); to Herod, whose spiritual faculties are atrophied by disuse, guidance can be given only indirectly through the agency of priests and scribes (verses 4–6); to these who have the Scriptures and study them, light comes through the prophet (verse 5); to Joseph, "the Lord appeareth . . . in a dream" (verse 13). But it is our greater privilege and responsibility to stand upon the shoulders of all these; "we have a yet more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1 : 19), for "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son" (Heb. 1 : 1). "He left not Himself without witness" (Acts 14 : 17), even among those to whom no written revelation has been given. Whether objectively, through nature (verse 2), through ecclesiastical channels (verse 4), through the Scriptures (verse 5), or subjectively, through mental process, by dream when asleep or by the reason when awake, the fact remains as Jesus puts it, "no man cometh unto the Father but by *Me*" (John 14 : 6).

They who had least advantage to start with, outdistanced all the rest. The "wise men from the East" brought to

the King "gifts" richer far than any that are included in the inventory of "their treasures." Rarer than "gold, and frankincense and myrrh" are the spiritual endowments of men gifted as were these: (1) They brought *spiritual insight* such as few of those around them could at all appreciate. While others with eyes bent down were absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure or the greedy quest of gain, the eyes of the "wise" were searching the heavens. And they saw "the star" when it appeared, because they had eyes to see; blessed were their eyes, for they saw.

(2) They had also *persistence in pursuit of Truth.* In that day when steam and electricity were not yet dreamed of, it was not easy to essay so long and arduous a journey, over river and desert from their far off homes. These were they who hitched their chariots to a star. They were dauntless pioneers. And because westward the Star of Bethlehem led the way, ever since

"Westward the Star of Empire holds its sway."

(3) *Obedience to the light* that they had, brought them to clearer light. At first they had only the light of Nature, but as they followed the gleam of the Star, they came to the clearer light of revelation. There is no conflict between science and religion, rightly interpreted. The two unite in leading to "the Light of the World." The world of God's creation and the Word of His Revelation are two volumes of one great work of God. "The Star" led to "the prophet." When "the wise men" went on to obey the clearer light, "lo, the Star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was" (verse 9).

All this took time, as well as effort. From the day when the Star first appeared, months must have elapsed

ere the men from the East at length arrived at Bethlehem. The presentation in the Temple when He was forty days old (Luke 2 : 22, Lev. 12 : 6) had undoubtedly taken place previously, for after the departure of the wise men there was no opportunity for this before the flight into Egypt. Hence it is unlikely that the wise men found him in the temporary shelter of the manger, as represented oftentimes in art.

One gloomy figure darkens the picture which otherwise would be so bright. This Herod, descended from an infamous line of Asmonean princes, is the first of four men bearing the same name who appear upon the pages of the New Testament:

(1) *Herod the Great* (or "the king") who is chiefly infamous because of the Slaughter of the Innocents (Matt. 2; Luke 1); (2) *Herod Antipas* (or the Tetrarch), the second son of Herod the Great, who beheaded John the Baptist (Matt. 14, Mark 7, Luke 3, 9, Acts 13 : 1); (3) Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great and nephew of Herod Antipas, who killed James the Apostle (Acts 12); (4) Herod Agrippa II, before whom Paul made his defense at Cæsarea (Acts 26). The unreasonable and merciless jealousy which Herod the Great showed towards Jesus can be accounted for only by the despicable meanness of this capricious despot. The slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem, recorded by Matthew only, is quite in line with other acts of Herod, that are attested by secular historians.

Sixth Day.—The Forerunner and the Anointing of the King (3).

It was fitting that the coming of the King should be

announced by a forerunner who would appear in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mal. 4 : 5 with Matt. 3 : 3) to prepare the way before Him (Is. 40 : 3 with Matt. 3 : 3). For, like Elijah, John

(1) Lived the simple life, in solitude (Matt. 3 : 1–4; cf. 1 Kings 17 : 2–6);

(2) Was in intimate touch with Jehovah (Mark 1 : 2; 1 Kings 17 : 1, 8);

(3) Had the ear of the people (Matt. 3 : 5);

(4) Fearlessly rebuked sin, in high as well as low (Matt. 3 : 7, 8; 14 : 4; cf. 1 Kings 18 : 18).

The self-effacement of John is reflected in statements such as these:

"There cometh one after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose" (Matt. 3 : 11);

"I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (Matt. 3 : 14);

"He must increase, and I must decrease" (John 3 : 30).

It was fitting that as the kings and priests of old were anointed on entering upon office, there should be some such sign when He who was to be both priest and king should make His public appearance. And the simple ceremony chosen was one which ever after should be shared by each one entering into the privileges and responsibilities of the "kingdom of priests unto God" (Rev. 1 : 6). Our Lord adopted baptism as an ordinance which was easily possible for all men everywhere, symbolizing, on man's part, the putting away of all uncleanness, and, on God's part, the imparting of the divine nature.

Seventh Day.—The Testing of the King (4).

"It became Him for whom are all things and through

whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2 : 10). It was essential, in order to His complete consecration into the office of King, that He should Himself: (1) Be conscious of all that is involved in a world of sin; (2) That He should Himself encounter and overcome the Adversary; (3) That He should thus demonstrate the divine method of establishing the Kingdom.

He was to run the entire gauntlet of temptation. This was no sham-fight, but a real life and death struggle, grappling with the Prince of the Power of the Air:

(1) The point of the first attack is on the lower plane of physical necessities for the sustenance of the animal life, "the lust of the flesh"; the real brunt of this assault, however, has to do with faith in the faithfulness of the Father. It is essentially a temptation to *distrust*, to abuse a sacred trust, to take things into His own hands, to save His life, and in so doing to lose it and, likewise, the life of all the world. Jesus was just entering on His public career. The visions of the future which were unfolding were no mere idle day-dreams, but a soul-stirring view of His life-work, the loftiest ideal the world had ever known, extending on to Calvary and beyond. He was even more a man than other holy men of whom similar experiences are recorded, even farther withdrawn in His spiritual humanity from the outer region of His physical nature. He was in a position, not of His own choice, where He could get no food; "the Spirit *driveth* Him forth into the wilderness" (Mark 1 : 13). And, when He had come to the utmost limit of human endurance, when He realized that He was actually dying of starvation, then in the hour of utmost exhaustion and deathly sinking, came the sug-

gestion of Satan, that this was hardly the state in which one might expect the Son of God to be. Does He not, in fact, rather appear to be a very mortal sort of man in extremely poor circumstances? If He is to be recognized as divine, is it not quite reasonable to ask for some proof? As in the earlier history of His race (Ex. 16 : 15), God had supplied bread supernaturally, would it not be well now to take some of these "bread stones" (silicious accretions resembling loaves) and spread a table for Himself here in the wilderness? The apparent good in this, would be: (*a*) to save His life, (*b*) to prevent His mission from proving a failure, (*c*) to prove His untried powers, and (*d*) to satisfy others, as well as Himself, as to His deity. But the real evil would be: (*a*) to show doubt of God's providence, (*b*) to abuse a sacred trust by employing divine power for personal ends, (*c*) to cut Himself off from human conditions, making Himself less the Son of Man, in order to prove Himself the Son of God.

(2) The second assault is from another side altogether; appeal is now to "the lust of the eye." This temptation is to *presumption;* the appeal is to the intellect. Satan has failed, but he is not foiled. He will profit, if possible, by the experience. He will take Jesus on his own premises and press to the opposite extreme. Satan, too, can quote Scripture. The first suggestion was a mistake, Satan now sees; absolute dependence upon God is undoubtedly the secret of life. Take this better basis, then, and make a fresh and proper experiment. There is the promise (Ps. 91 : 11): "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone." The temple is the centre of attraction towards which all eyes are turned. The people are looking for the Messiah. Their appetite for

the marvellous is well known. What shorter cut could there be to the throne, than for Jesus to go to the Temple at the hour of the daily sacrifice, when all eyes are turned thither, and from the topmost point, fling Himself down, relying upon God to reverse His law and land Him safely on the ground? The apparent good in this would be: (*a*) to show absolute confidence in God, even at the risk of His life, (*b*) to win His way to the confidence of men, and thus the more quickly attain His end. But the real evil of it would be: (*a*) to show presumption, instead of faith, testing God, instead of trusting His Word; (*b*) to violate the natural law of gravitation; (*c*) to contravene the prophecy, that the crown should be reached by way of the Cross.

(3) The final attack is a bolder stroke with audacious daring, appealing to "the pride of life" and alluring to *ambition*. It invades the realm of the Spirit and deals with "worship." The adversary stakes all in a last move of desperation. He is not so clumsy, however, as to make a bald request for homage; he, now, with skillful cunning, works on the imagination, unfolding in a moment of time a panorama of the kingdoms of this world. It is the purpose of Jesus to establish a universal kingdom. On the one hand, the wealth, the pomp, the power of the nations; on the other hand, the poverty, the sickness, the misery of the race. Armies, navies, treasuries, all are under the control of the Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2: 2). All shall be at the absolute command of the Christ, if only He will acknowledge the Prince of this world (John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11). The apparent good in what is proposed, is: (*a*) to save time, avoiding the weary centuries of delay due to the disobedience of the church, (*b*) to avoid the Cross, obviating Gethsemane and Calvary. The real evil

would be: (*a*) to put faith in a promise which was a lie, and which would not be fulfilled, even if it could be; (*b*) to contradict the great first law of the spiritual kingdom, that "he that loseth his life shall find it."

Thus, the attack is made in turn, on the plane of the physical, the intellectual and the spiritual, but nowhere is there found a vulnerable point in the armour of Jesus.

The whole ordeal is strikingly like, in its method, to that to which the first Adam was subjected, although so different in its outcome. In the former, "the lust of the flesh" is appealed to by that which is "good for food" (Gen. 3: 6), in this case, "stones made bread" (Matt. 4: 3); "the lust of the eye," in the former, is suggested by that which is "a delight to the eyes" (Gen. 3: 6), in this, by the suggestion of a spectacular display, "cast thyself down" (Matt. 4: 6); "the pride of life" in the former, "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3: 5), in this by the promise "All these will I give thee" (Matt. 4: 9). In each case the Adversary begins by insinuating a doubt: in the former, "Hath God said?" (Gen. 3: 1), here "If." In each case, an interpolation is added to the Word: in the former, "Neither shall ye touch it" (Gen. 3: 3), in this, "At any time" or "haply" (Matt. 4:6, cf. Ps. 91: 11, 12).

The outcome is vastly different: in the former, every gateway to the soul is captured, as one sense after another is seized by the Tempter's power, while human reason reels before his assaults; in this case, one weapon of defense only is employed and that the Sword of the Spirit. With the decisive answer each time, "It is written," a sharp two-edged blade is drawn from the scabbard of the book of Deuteronomy.

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY II

HIS PREPARATION AS KING

First Day.—Prophecy Fulfilled.

His *Nature and Names.*

In what two aspects, mainly, is the Messiah presented? Give references.

Which of these has been most emphasized by the Jew? Which by the Christian?

What was foretold as to His Nature? His Names?

Second Day.—Prophecy Fulfilled.

His *Offices.*

What offices are combined in the Christ? Give the principal predictions.

How are these offices related to one another?

Third Day.—His Pedigree (1 : 1–17).

How does the genealogy according to Matthew differ from that of Luke? Why? (Luke 3 : 22–38).

What evidence of divine design appears in this history?

Test your knowledge of the sacred history by stating in a sentence, each, what you know of those named.

What women are mentioned and why these particularly?

What links are left out of the chain of the genealogy? See 2 Kings 8 : 25; 2 Chron. 22 : 1; 2 Kings 12 : 21; 23 : 34; 2 Chron. 36 : 4.

What promise to Abraham is now fulfilled? What to David?

Fourth Day.—His Birth (1 : 18–25).

What prophecies were fulfilled in His birth?

Why born in Bethlehem?

Why named Jesus?

Fifth Day.—Royal Homage and a Royal Rival (2 : 1–23).

What classes were represented at Bethlehem?

What various methods of communication does God employ with various men? What their comparative value?

What "gifts" did the wise men bring other than those explicitly named?

How was the Herod here mentioned related to the others named in the Scriptures?

Sixth Day.—The Forerunner and the Anointing of the King. (3 : 1–17).

Give the passages which identify John as the Second Elijah.

In what respects were the two alike?

What event marked the entry of Jesus upon His public life?

What signified by the ceremony?

Seventh Day.—The Testing of the King (4 : 1–11).

What object accomplished by the Temptation?

What the point of the first attack? The second? The third?

Give the gist of each in your own words. The apparent good and the real evil involved in each? Compare with the temptation of the first Adam, showing resemblances and contrasts. What weapon employed?

STUDY III

HIS PROGRAM AS PROPHET

The New Man, (4 : 12–5 : 16)

First Day.—His Plan and Associates (4 : 12–25).

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:
But in the law of Jehovah is his delight
And on His law doth he muse by day and by night.
And so becomes LIKE A TREE deep-planted by the water-trenches,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose foliage also doth not fade,
And whatsoever he doeth, he successfully carries it through."

AT last the King has come. The decisive battle of the wilderness has been fought and won. The great work of bringing in the kingdom is now about to be begun in the comparatively free air of the north country. Over the Galilean hills the Sun of Righteousness is rising with healing in His wings. Before He can be acknowledged King, He must first fill the office of Prophet, proclaiming the principles of the Kingdom and gathering the subjects who are to hail Him King. "From that time began Jesus to preach" (4 : 17): this formula marks a new point of departure in the development of this book. With no uncertain sound the key-note of the Kingdom rings out. It is identically the same as the Forerunner had announced (2 : 2): "*Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Could anything be simpler or clearer or more

direct and comprehensive? Great moral issues are raised and on these lines a new era is to be ushered in.

He now selects the first of that inner circle that is to be trained for leadership in the great undertaking; "*Come ye* after Me" (4: 19) is the Great Invitation, to which later on, after He has Himself shown the way, is to be added the Great Commission, "*Go ye*" (28: 19). The two indicate the fundamental forces of the Spiritual Kingdom: the Centripetal, "Come"; the Centrifugal, "Go." Now He proceeds to indicate the process (4: 23) which is to be pursued in bringing in the Kingdom: "teaching" (the mind) . . . "preaching" (to the spirit) . . . "healing" (the body). His work touches life on every side—the intellectual, the spiritual, the physical. The Gospel is for the whole man: nothing short of that will meet the case. Jesus' plan of making the Kingdom is by making the New Man, then multiplying him. This New Man is the unit of the new Kingdom—"a new creature in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 5: 17). He makes men children of God, and thus He constitutes the Kingdom.

Second Day.—Introduction to the King's Manifesto (5: 1,2).

On entering upon the "teaching" office, the Prophet utters the initial word of the Kingdom in the Great State paper, which is sometimes inadequately described as "the Sermon on the Mount."

This prophet is more than a prophet; He is also King. He is come not to found a school, but a Kingdom; not to be a mere teacher, but a sovereign, too. His claim upon His disciples is not that of a philosopher presenting the conclusions of speculative thought, but of the Lord of Life.

He claims not only to teach the truth, but to *be* the Truth, at once the revelation and the Revealer. "I am . . . the Truth" (John 14: 6). His formula is not, "Thus saith the Lord," but "Verily, verily, I say unto you" (John 1: 51). Never before or since has any such stupendous claim been made by any man. Jesus cannot be compared with any other. He occupies a position absolutely unique and incomparable.

As He sets out now to establish His Kingdom, with grand though simple dignity He chooses for His seat "a mountain"—a massive chair of adamant, compared with which the British Coronation Chair, with its "Stone of Scone," seems but a petty toy. And there with the high arch of heaven for His canopy, with the multitude flocking about Him and hanging on His words, with His little body-guard of disciples standing as courtiers by His side, this kingly Christ is "set" (even as "the Kings of the earth set themselves") and proceeds to lay down the basis of His everlasting Kingdom of "righteousness and peace and joy" (Rom. 14: 17) that is to be established within the hearts of men everywhere.

Embodying the fundamental principles upon which His Kingdom is to be administered, this great Manifesto of the King may be summed up in this thesis:

The New Man (5: 1–16) under *The New Law* (17–48) lives *The New Life* (chaps. 7,8).

In the first section, is unfolded the process of the evolution of the New Man. Where can be found a better definition of a true evolution than that which Jesus Himself gives (Mark 4: 28): "*First the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear*" But in His view there is no "missing link." Before "the blade," He postulates the seed, "Except a corn of wheat fall into

the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12 : 24). And before the corn of wheat, the seed, He postulates an intelligent and omnipotent First Cause, the Lord of Life, "I give . . . eternal life" (John 10 : 28); yea "I am the . . . Life" (John 11 : 25). "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. . . . In Him was Life" (John 1 : 1–4). "As the Father hath Life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have Life in Himself" (John 5 : 26); "Even as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17 : 2,3). While atheistic evolution has got no farther than "In the beginning," the evolution of Jesus has a complete Book of Genesis: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was GOD" (John 1 : 1).

A casual reader of the "Beatitudes" might make the mistake of supposing them to be disconnected proverbs or promises which, like a string of pearls, may be restrung without breaking the thread of thought or doing violence to any vital connection. But, far from this, even the transposition of verses four and five (as indicated in the margin of the more accurate Revised Version) makes a discord which jars upon the careful Bible student. The thought is as closely woven as a web of gossamer.

Throughout all, there runs the scarlet thread of "Righteousness," appearing in paragraph after paragraph (verses 6, 10, 20) and outlining the pattern of the whole. The common quantity in each of the fundamental ideas of this matchless Address from the Throne, is that of Blessedness.

With Righteousness in his heart, this New Man has Blessedness plainly reflected upon his face. Righteousness is the root from which comes the fruit of Blessedness. And this Blessedness is more than happiness. For it does not depend upon what *happens*, but strikes its roots deep down into the divine will. It is the outcome not of circumstances, but of character. Acquire the character of Righteousness and Blessedness follows inevitably. Cause is not to be confounded with effect. Not he who seeks blessedness, finds righteousness, but he who seeks righteousness is "blessed."

Like the deep undertone of the bass, this Blessedness harmonizes with every note of the octave, as note after note rises in the scale—"poor in spirit," "meek," "mourn," "hunger and thirst," "merciful," "pure," "peacemakers," "persecuted." To trace out the process of the development of this New Man who is to be multiplied until the New Kingdom is constituted, is to find the clew to all true Blessedness in Righteousness. And this open secret is unfolded in this marvellous Manifesto of the King.

Third Day.—The Roots of the Tree of Life (5 : 3–5).

Underlying the whole may be found the seed-thought which appears so prominently towards the close, where (7 : 16–20) the word "tree" occurs five times and "fruit" seven times, all within a dozen lines. It would seem as though the suggestion of this great manifesto were taken from the first Psalm, which our Lord had learned and loved from His earliest childhood and which had left a deep impress on His whole life. The core of it is in the simile, "*He shall be like a Tree*" (Psalm 1 : 3). And, does not a man indeed resemble a tree, with his trunk,

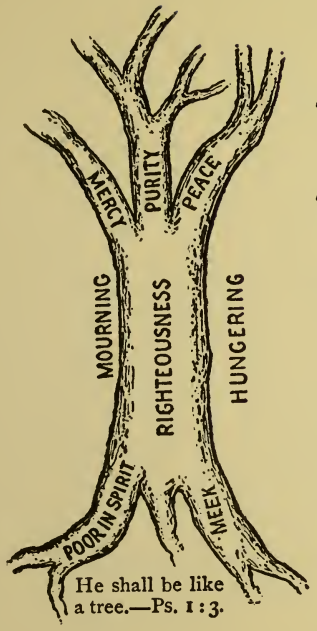
connected by two legs, like roots, with the earth below and with his branches extending out on either side, while, central between the two, the head reaches erect towards heaven? Planted squarely with one foot in humility ("Poor in Spirit") and with the other in meekness, the life currents flow downward in mourning because of sin and upwards in yearning after righteousness, while in due season appear on the one hand mercy and on the other peace, and all heads up in purity, "as he thinketh within himself" (Prov. 23 : 7). Trace the unfolding of this simile of the tree in its several consecutive parts; at each stage there will be found to be a Godward and a manward side towards which the soul turns. [See opposite page.]

I. The Roots.

(1) *Godward:*

"Blessed are *the poor in spirit,* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

As a large part of a tree is under the surface, so an important part of the life of the New Man is, likewise, unseen. It starts, as it were, with a minus quantity in reaching the desired result in its quest for righteousness. The soul on catching its first glimpse of God gets down on its face in the dust. It is humbled. It realizes its own utter worthlessness, its exceeding poverty. At the creation, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2 : 7). So when the New Man is to be produced, God does not make him out of a block of marble. He has no use for the hard rock of self-will. The "stony heart" (Ezek. 11 : 19) must first be reduced to dust and out of such material as this, is made the "man after his own heart" (1 Sam. 13 : 14). "Before honour is



The New Man (Matt. 5: 1–16)

The Blessedness of Righteousness

The Root — *"The corn of wheat"* (John 12: 24).
Verse 3. Godward—"Poor in spirit."
Verse 5. Manward—"Meek."

The Shoot — *"First the blade"*—(Mark 4: 28).
Verse 4. Towards Sin—"Mourn."
Verse 6. Towards Righteousness—"Hunger."

The Fruit — *"Then the ear."*
Verse 7. Practical Proof—"Merciful."
Verse 8. Essential Principle—"Pure."
Verse 9. Spiritual Power—"Peacemakers."

The Test — *"By their fruits . . . know them"* (Matt. 7: 16).
Verses 10–12. Tongue-Trial—"Persecuted."

The Use
Verse 13. To Permeate (Within)—"Salt."
Verse 14. To Illuminate (Without) { The world / A city / The house } "Light."
Verse 16. "To Glorify Your Father."

humility" (Prov. 15 : 33). It was in this spirit that Charles Gordon, that great Christian soldier, shortly before the fateful end of his career at Khartoum, the Dhervish capital of the Soudan, wrote, "May I be ground to dust, if He will but glorify Himself in Me." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51 : 17). "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Is. 57 : 15).

Humility is the first step in

> "The great world's altar-stairs
> That lead through darkness up to God."

There is no deferred payment in connection with this promise, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This one of all the promises is put in the present tense, even though it be necessary to wait patiently for the fulfillment of the hopes held out in the promises that follow. What shall be, will appear in due season, but to those who submit themselves to the king, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

(2) *Manward:*

"Blessed are *the meek*, for they shall inherit the earth."

The soul that is right in its attitude towards God, will seek, likewise, to be right with its fellow men. Meekness in relation to men is the essential sequel to humility towards God. These two are twin virtues. They reach out in two directions. He who has the root of the matter in him, being made "a partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1 : 4), lays hold of both "heaven" and "earth!" The possession of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ"

(2 Cor. 10 : 1) in relation to men, is the only conclusive proof that the soul is truly "poor in spirit" towards God. The two characteristics together mark the disintegration of the self-life. The corn of wheat, dying, no longer abides alone. The "blade" is about to appear.

Fourth Day.—II. The Shoot or Trunk (5 : 4, 6).

(1) *Earthward:*

"Blessed are they that *mourn*, for they shall be comforted."

In its quest for righteousness, the soul first faces earthward, and, oppressed with a sense of its sin, it *mourns*. There is a movement now out of the merely negative. The soul shows signs of the new life that is stirring within. The plant that is pushing its way up through the dust of humility is watered by tears of true penitence. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Behold this self-same thing that ye sorrow after a godly sort. What carefulness is brought in you, yea what clearing of yourself, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge" (2 Cor. 7 : 10).

> "I lay in dust earth's glory red,
> And from the ground there blossoms red
> Life that shall endless be."

(2) *Heavenward:*

"Blessed are they that do *hunger and thirst* after righteousness for they shall be filled."

By the power of an irresistible attraction the life within is now stretching every fibre, as it reaches up towards the

Sun of Righteousness. The soul seeks a new centre of attraction. Its tendency is sunward, heavenward. It hungers and thirsts. The presence of appetite is the sure sign of growing life. Yet another stage is now at hand.

Fifth Day.—III. The Fruits (5 : 7–9).

(1) *Mercy:*

"Blessed are the *merciful* for they shall obtain mercy."

The search for righteousness is bringing the soul within reach of its attainment. The conditions having been met, the plant is about to bear its threefold fruit: mercy, purity and peace. Desires are converted into action. The soul gets out of itself and becomes absorbed in helping others. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to *love mercy* and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6 : 8). It breaks off its sins by righteousness and its iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (Dan. 4 : 27). He who has any question as to who is the true neighbour gets the answer from the Master's own lips, "He that showed mercy" (Luke 10 : 37).

> "The quality of mercy is not strained.
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed—
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
> . . . It is an attribute to God Himself;
> And earthly power doth show likest God
> When mercy seasons justice."

(2) *Purity:*

"Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall see God."

Back of the active manifestation must be the inner principle. "Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4 : 23). If

mercy is to be manifested without, there must be purity within. "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? . . . He that hath . . . a pure heart" (Psalm 24 : 3, 4). "Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not befitting" (Eph. 5 : 3, 4). "Put to death, therefore, your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire" (Col. 3 : 5). "Whatsoever things are . . . pure, think on these things" (Phil. 4 : 8). "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5 : 22), was Paul's injunction to Timothy. "Purify your hearts" (Jas. 4 : 8), was James' counsel to the scattered tribes of Israel. The standard set by John was nothing short of the spotless purity of Christ, incited thereto by the constant expectation of His personal appearing. "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3 : 3).

(3) *Peace :*

"Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called the sons of God."

Last of all, comes the most luscious fruit of all, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4: 7). It is no mere act, but an attitude, yes an atmosphere that is here referred to. "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14 : 17). "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Is. 57 : 21). But "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever" (Is. 32 : 17). This peace comes as effect follows cause. It could never have been but for "the blood of His cross" (Col. 1 : 20). "He is our

peace," who came and "made peace" and then "preached peace" to them that were afar off and them that are nigh" (Eph. 2 : 14–17).

In the progression of thought in the development of this choice cluster of fruits, is there not an evident correspondence with the three degrees of the prayer-life, as set forth in Matt. 7 : 7, viz :

"Ask . . . receive" (the gift)—"Obtain mercy."

"Seek . . . find" (the Giver)—"See God."

"Knock . . . opened" (asker and giver meeting)—"Called sons of God"?

In the apostolic benediction these three are all combined in an overflowing blessing, "Grace (of purity), mercy and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (1 Tim. 1 : 2).

Sixth Day.—IV. The Test of Righteousness.

"Blessed are they that have been *persecuted* for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Is the righteousness real? Will the tree stand the stress of the storm? Shaking will show. Persecution will prove whether the roots have struck down deep, whether the stem is strong, whether the fruit is genuine or only artificial. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7 : 16).

Ours is the day of easy-going discipleship, but if one will but make a staunch stand for righteousness, he will find that the Inquisition is not altogether a thing of the past. The weapons of the persecutor are more polished, but they are no less sharp. A more refined cruelty may be practiced with the tongue than with the thumb-screw and the rack. There may be many an occasion still for applying the Earl of Marshall's motto, "They say; let

them say; I care not what they say!" Nor is this blessing promised alone to those of a bygone day, but "blessed are *ye* when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven." The reward may not be realized at once, but it is absolutely sure "in heaven." This is one of the ways to lay up treasure where it cannot be tampered with. This is a promissory note that matures a little later, but it is good collateral even on earth.

Seventh Day.—V. The Uses of Righteousness.

(1) *Within.*

"Ye are *the salt of* the earth."

Rights involve responsibilities. Every saved man is under obligation to be a saviour. But much of the influence exerted will be silent and unseen, like "salt," permeating the whole of the life with which he comes in contact.

(2) *Without.*

"Ye are *the light* of the world . . . a city . . . the house."

There is one respect in which every true Christian, in the very nature of the case, is bound to be like Christ. For He who says, "I am the Light of the World" (John 8: 12), likewise declares, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 14). The Great Commission resides, ultimately, not in certain words of a command; it is inherent in the very possession of the light. "For ye were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord: walk as children of light; for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5: 8). "The

Christian must illuminate, just because he is a light. Is it not significant that the command to shine includes first, "the world," then "the city," then "the house." This is the divine order. Often the order is inverted, forgetful of the fact, that while it is true that "the light that shines the farthest shines brightest nearest home," the converse is not necessarily the case. For while the whole includes the parts, a part does not include the whole; while "the world" includes "the city" and "the house," the city or house does not include "the world."

The life that is like "salt" within and like "light" without, cannot but fulfill the chief end of men, to "glorify the Father who is in heaven."

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY III

THE NEW MAN

First Day.

What formula marks a new departure in the development of the book? At what other point does it occur?

What key-note does Jesus sound on entering upon the office of prophet?

Second Day.

How may the manifesto of the kingdom (Matt. 5–7) be briefly summed up?

What does the first section cover?

What idea is central throughout this section?

What is the significance of the common term used?

What is the connection between blessedness and righteousness?

Third Day.

Where is the embryo of this great address to be found? What the key-words?

To what transposition of verses (4 and 5) is attention called in the Revised Version (margin)?

What is the attitude towards God which the New Man takes?

What towards fellow men?

Fourth Day.

How does the soul indicate its attitude towards sin? How distinguished from other sorrow?

What is its attitude towards righteousness?

Fifth Day.

What trinity of virtues appears as the fruits of righteousness?

What place does mercy occupy? Purity? Peace?

What progression of thought appears?

Sixth Day.

What test of genuineness is suggested?

What means of persecution is most commonly employed now? How best met?

Seventh Day.

To what uses is righteousness to be put?

How does it act as "salt"? How as "light"? In what three concentric circles? Note the significance of the order of these.

STUDY IV

HIS PROGRAM AS PROPHET

The New Law, (5 : 17–48)

First Day.—The Old Commandment in contrast with the New (5 : 17–19).

"THIS do and thou shalt live," is the high-water mark of the ethnic religions. Even Judaism, the fairest flower of them all, has no word beyond this. "LIVE and thou wilt do," is the sum and substance of the message of Jesus. Every moral system, other than Christ's, is a road whereby, through self-denial, discipline, striving, men seek to attain to bliss in the end. Whether known as the Nirvana of the Hindu or the Paradise of the Mohammedan or the *summum bonum* of the Greek philosopher, or the "eternal life" of the Jew, the end is to be attained by one's own endeavours. You must lift yourself up to heaven by the hairs of your own head. You must swim across the wide ocean to the other shore. But what all others point to as the goal, Jesus makes *the starting point.* They begin with demanding, He with bestowing. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12 : 32). "I give unto them Eternal Life" (John 10 : 28).

It is no mere system of metaphysics, but a sublime code of ethics, that Christ lays down. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets : I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (5 : 17). Indeed the New Commandment goes far beyond the old. But the keeping of it becomes a consequence, and not the condition or cause of life eternal. In the very nature of the case eternal life conforms to the

eternal law of the eternal God, who is the source of life. And the Law as revealed to Moses sweeps the whole circle of human relationships—to God, to the family and to neighbours, both far and near.

Second Day.—The New Commandment fulfilling the Old (5 : 20).

In the teaching of the New Testament every injunction of the Old Commandment finds its complement. The negative is converted into positive form. As is the Old, so in the New Law, there are two Tables. The first includes the Centripetal forces, the second includes the Centrifugal.

When we come to examine the commandments set forth by our Lord in the Manifesto of the Kingdom, the first thing that attracts attention is the omission of any reference whatever to the First table—which relates to God—and, also, to the first Commandment of the second Table, which relates to parents. The reason becomes apparent when the standpoint is taken into account. For these commandments contemplate a Kingdom over which the King Himself is to preside in person. "For He must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15 : 25). And the one and only parent, finally, is to be "the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. 3 : 14, 15). "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the Kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15 : 24).

Third Day.

If the New Man, who is the subject of the New King-

dom, is to be absolutely right in his relations with his fellow men, through and through, he must be quite free from:

Ill-will or unkind feeling.
mpurity or unchaste thought.
nsincerity or untrue word.
mpatience or ungentle act.

And his whole life must be filled with love.

(1) *No unkind feeling or ill-will* (*5 : 21–26*).

The King commences at the core, with the will. Into the innermost recesses of the heart, where the springs of life have their source, He turns on the searchlight. "For out of the heart come forth . . . murders" (Matt. 15 : 19). Are fires of angry passion smoldering under the surface, no matter whether uttered or unexpressed? Is there some old wrong that you have failed to set right and the memory of it tracks your steps even into the place of prayer? Let the light of God's holy law be turned in, even to the innermost recesses of the will, until the darkness shall have altogether disappeared.

Fourth Day.

(2) *No unchaste thought or impurity* (*5 : 27–32*).

After the will has been dealt with, the realm of the *intellect* is entered next. Let the light into thought and imagination, likewise. Look well to the outer gates through which suggestions come—to eye-gate and ear-gate and also to the sense of touch. Let no pretext of legal permission serve as an excuse for infringing the divine law of fidelity to the marriage relation. Spotless white is the uniform of the subjects of the New Kingdom.

Fifth Day.

(3) *No untrue word, or insincerity* (*5 : 33–37*).

Passing now from thought to its expression, every *word* is to be absolutely true. No oath is needed, for the word of the New Man is to be as good as his bond. In the vocabulary of the New Life, Yea never means Nay. Expletives are excluded. "As God is faithful, our word . . . is not Yea and Nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ . . . was not Yea and Nay, but in Him is Yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea; wherefore also in Him is the Amen unto the glory of God through us" (2 Cor. 1 : 18–20).

Sixth Day.

(4) *No ungentle act, or impatience* (*5 : 38–42*).

As at the centre and through each successive circle, so also at the circumference, in the sphere of *action*, the same high standard is to be maintained. Unfailing gentleness is required, no matter how great provocation there may be. He should even suffer wrongfully rather than resist and assert his rights. If a false claim is made upon that which belongs to the New Man, he is to let it go, rather than go to law. And he is not to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the needy.

Seventh Day.

(5) *No Retaliation, but love* (*5 : 43–48*).

There is one word which covers all. "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. 5 : 14). "If there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love

worketh no ill to his neighbour; love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13: 9, 10).

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY IV

THE NEW LAW

First Day.

In what important particular does Christianity differentiate itself from the non-Christian religions?

What is Jesus' attitude to the law?

Analyze "the Old Commandment."

Second Day.

Give the New Testament parallels to each point in "the Old Commandment."

In the New Commandment, as given in the Manifesto, what significant omissions are there and how accounted for?

Third Day.

Over what range does Jesus proceed to apply the Law?

In what particular first? And how?

Fourth Day.

What the second?

Fifth Day.

The third?

Sixth Day.

The fourth?

Seventh Day.

In what is all summed up?

STUDY V

HIS PROGRAM AS PROPHET

The New Life (*Chs. 6 and 7*)

First Day.—Giving, the Initial Grace of Christian Living (6 : 1–4).

WHILE philosophers have come seeking to *find* a perfect man, and seeking in vain, the Saviour comes seeking to *make* a perfect man. He knew that there was none perfect, no not one. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19 : 10). His one main aim is to "make all things new" (Rev. 21 : 5). He must first make a New Man. This New Man under the New Law is to live the New Life. And this Life, as outlined in the Manifesto of the Kingdom, involves, in the main, two things, viz.: GIVING and PRAYING. In order to give, he must get; in order to get he must pray. These two are the hemispheres of the full-orbed Christian life. Of the two, GIVING is given first place, although PRAYING is allowed by far the greater space.

(1) *Giving* (6 : 1–4). "When, therefore, thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

There are other points to be observed in practicing the grace of Giving, but, the one particular, of all the others, which Jesus seems to consider of such primary importance as to be emphasized here, is, that it must be "in secret." Giving should be individual, systematic and proportionate

(2 Cor. 16 : 2). It should be "cheerful" (2 Cor. 9 : 7). It should be done as an act of worship unto God (Ex. 25 : 2; Prov. 3 : 9; Isaiah 43 : 23, 24). But, it may be all this and yet be utterly useless, if self be allowed to obtrude. Generous, godlike giving is the crucial test of genuine godly living. "For God so loved the world that He GAVE" (John 3 : 16).

Second Day.—2. Praying the Complement of Giving (6 : 5–15).

In order to give, one must first receive, and in order to receive, one must pray. "Ask and ye shall receive" (Matt. 7 : 7). In the training of His disciples, Jesus, while apparently taking no time to tell them how to preach, takes infinite pains to teach them to pray. And, hence, it is not surprising to find so large a portion of the treatment of the New Life devoted to the subject of Praying.

(*a*) At first He tells HOW to Pray. As in the matter of Giving, so here again, the one particular which He puts first, is that it is to be "in secret."

THE MODEL PRAYER (6 : 7–15).

(*b*) He, also, tells us for WHAT to pray. Not only secrecy, but brevity should characterize the prayer of the Christian, as distinguished from all others. The model prayer is at once concise and comprehensive. Indeed, within its brief compass, it embraces every need of present, past and future; of body, soul and spirit; in relation to one's self, to one's neighbour and to God.

(1) "Bread": The Present—Body—relating to one's self.

(2) "Debt": The Past—Soul—relating to fellow man.

(3) "Temptation": The Future—Spirit—relating to God.

Throughout, it puts God's glory first, keeping in view alike each person of the blessed Trinity:

(1) "Hallowed be Thy name"—Father.

(2) "Thy Kingdom"—Son.

(3) "Thy will be done"—Spirit.

The model prayer translates the Father's will into the terms of the Son's wishes. The key-note of the prayer-life of Jesus is "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). Is it conceivable that the close parallel between this Model Prayer, which Jesus gave to the Church for all time, and the Ten Commandments can be accidental? Does it not show how completely our Lord's mind had absorbed the Scriptures? Jesus, in this prayer, certainly seems to be converting

The Father's Will (Ex. 20:1–17)	into	*The Son's Wishes.* (Matt. 6:9–13)
1. No other Gods but Me		"Our Father
2. No image on Earth		Which art *in heaven;*
3. Not take the Name in vain		Hallowed be Thy *Name*
4. Remember the Sabbath day [the "sign" of the kingdom (Ex. 31:13; Ezek. 20:19)]		Thy kingdom come
5. Honour thy father (the debt of the parent to provide; of the child, to honour).		Give us this day our daily bread
6. No murder. 7. No adultery. 8. No stealing. 9. No false witness. 10. No coveting.		Lead us not into temptation, but Deliver us from the Evil One
"I AM the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (a typical kingdom)		For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever." AMEN.

Third Day.—Fasting, a Help to Praying (6 : 16–18).

There are certain helps to prayer and certain hindrances, that are now taken up, one after another, before coming to the more advanced degree of intercessory prayer (7 : 7–12). And the first of these is Fasting. Every appetite of the flesh that clogs the free exercise of the soul in prayer is to be subdued. Fasting consists not in abstinence from food, merely, but from everything that pampers self. Many a Mohammedan to-day fasts during the day and feasts at night. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul and thou takest no knowledge? Behold in the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure and oppress all your labourers. Behold ye fast for strife and contention and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye fast not this day so as to make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen? The day for a man to afflict his soul? Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring to thy house the poor that are cast out? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh" (Isaiah 58 : 3–7).

Fourth Day.—Hindrances to Prayer (6 : 19 ; 7 :).

(1) *Worrying, a Hindrance to Prayer* (6 : 19–34).

Care is a canker that corrodes the soul. Care kills prayer. It is the very opposite of trust. He who is hoarding up in barn or bank, is likely sooner or later to feel that there is no need to pray. This is "the deceitfulness of riches," the peril that comes to the soul from having too much of which to take care. But on the other

hand, care may come from the very opposite side, from having too little. But in either case, the lesson of absolute dependence upon the Father is to be learned from the birds in the wood and the flowers of the field. Will not He who made them, likewise care for them? And will He who so carefully cares for the lesser, neglect the greater? Wherefore banish care; resort to prayer. Put the interest of the Kingdom first and trust all the rest to the Father's faithfulness.

(2) *Judging Others, Another Hindrance* (7 : 1–5).

Censoriousness is a common cause of failure in the prayer-life. He who faithfully judges himself, is not likely to have much time to sit in judgment upon others. The busier one may be in getting rid of his own faults, the less attention will he turn to those of others.

Both worrying and judging others no doubt have a bearing upon the New Life wider than as merely affecting prayer, but if guarded against in this connection, they are not likely to cause much trouble elsewhere.

Fifth Day.—A Second Degree in the Prayer-Life (7 : 6–12).

Now there is needed only a brief word of warning as to how best to use what is obtained in answer to prayer. Pearls are not to be cast before swine.

Then the advanced degree in the prayer-life is reached in intercession. The injunction to prayer is now further unfolded. It is threefold: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Here is a distinct progression of thought from the gift which is to be obtained, to the Giver who is to be found, and then on to where Giver and Asker meet in intimate fellowship. Encouragement to expect the answer is

derived from a comparison between the willingness of the earthly parent to give to his children and that of the Father in heaven.

It is worthy of note, that what is known as the Golden Rule relates directly to prayer. Only he who follows the Golden Rule can have the Golden Key to the Golden Storehouse of God's gifts.

Sixth Day.—"The Narrow Gate" (7 : 13–23).

And now, looking back, these two great outstanding features of Giving and Praying appear as the pillars of "the narrow gate" that leadeth unto Life—the New Life which the New Man, under the New Law, is to lead. Through this portal they only can pass who learn to give and to pray. If only these two features were to be regarded as indispensable requisites for admission to the Christian Church, as they are for "the way that leadeth unto Life" would it not be better, even though undoubtedly many would be denied who are now admitted to membership?

But it is absolutely essential that "false prophets" be debarred, and that by this perfectly fair test: "By their fruits ye shall know them." If "planted by the streams of water," the tree "bringeth forth its fruit in its season."

In this paragraph (7 : 15–23) with its repeated reference to the "tree," with the word "fruit" recurring six times within a few verses, is found the clue to the thought suggested by Psalm 1 : 3, which underlies the whole of this wonderful Manifesto: the New Man in Christ Jesus "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water."

Seventh Day.—The Conclusion (7 : 24–28).

"Therefore"—and here we come to the conclusion of

this whole matter. The one and only test of the effect of the Master's teaching is *obedience—doing the will of the Father in heaven.* Every man is a builder.

"All are architects of Fate
Building in these halls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

"For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our To-days and Yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

"Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

"Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky."

The life and not the lip, the fruit and not the leaf—affords the supreme and final test of what every man really is. It is *the builder*, and not merely the building, that will be put to the test, in the time of storm and stress. The Rock of Ages is the only firm foundation.

"On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

"Therefore," "be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1 : 22).

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY V

THE NEW LIFE

First Day.

What is the first grace that Jesus emphasizes in treating of the New Life?

What is the one point on which He dwells in connection therewith?

What other points are likewise important in regard to Giving?

Second Day.

What other grace is next enjoined?

What point is first mentioned?

Analyze the Model Prayer.

What parallel between it and the Ten Commandments?

Third Day.

What is the relation between Fasting and Prayer?

What does true fasting involve?

Fourth Day.

What hindrances to prayer are dwelt with?

How does worry interfere with prayer?

How does judging others interfere?

Fifth Day.

What word of warning is given before the prayer-promise is repeated? And why?

What progression of thought is there in this promise?

What has the Golden Rule to do with Prayer?

Sixth Day.

What two pillars constitute "the Narrow Gate"?

How are "false prophets" to be distinguished and debarred?

Seventh Day.

What is the supreme and final test of character and conduct?

STUDY VI

THE NEW SERVICE

Works of Power (commencing with 8 : 1.)

First Day.—The Nature of Sin (8 : 1–17).

"The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain.
We touch Him in life's throng and press
And we are whole again."

THE Royal Proclamation must bear the Royal Seal. It is not enough to issue the manifesto; it must also be attested. The great State paper having gone forth, now there follow twenty-one mighty works of power—three times seven miracles. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with *power*, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10 : 38). Power is the manifestation of the person. Christ must show Himself to be King throughout the whole realm of nature and of human nature—over all natural forces and disease and even death. Divine life must prove itself completely dominant over all the consequences of human sin. Righteousness must reign and sin must cease.

The miracles[1] recorded in this book cover a wide range,

[1] The bracketed numbers in heavy faced type indicate the order of the miracles as given in the tabular summary at the end of this book.

showing how perfectly the ruin of sin is restored by Him who has come to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3 : 8) and to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14: 17). Provision is perfectly made in Christ against the pollution and power, as well as the penalty of sin (Rom. 6 : 22, 23).

The first group of miracles (8 : 1–4) illustrates the *nature* of sin : its loathsomeness—leprosy ; its helplessness—palsy (5–13); its restlessness—fever (14–17). Sin must be dealt with in each of its phases :

[1] *Leprosy* (8 : 2) is, perhaps, the most strikingly suggestive symbol of sin. It defiles and it separates. In Leviticus (chs. 13,14) the most minute directions are given, with a view to detecting the presence of the disease in its inception ; and whenever found, the leper, with clothes rent, hair loose, upper lip uncovered, dwelling alone and "without the camp," was compelled to warn off every one with the cry of "Unclean, Unclean." Provision was made, through the priesthood, for the restoring of the man who was found to be free from the dire disease, but no cure could be offered him upon whom this curse had actually come. Atonement must be made in every case where leprosy was suspected, whether in person or dwelling. But Jesus deals with the disease very differently. No leper ever comes to Him without being healed. He does not hesitate even to touch the leper, but a word of His power is enough to restore to perfect soundness once more. And Christ is able to cure a leprous soul. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1 : 18).

[2] Sin paralyzes. It is *palsy* (8 : 5). It makes men feeble, as well as foul. Hence it is necessary not only that

the uncleanness be removed, but likewise that the strength shall be restored. And this, Jesus does; "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5 : 6). "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4 : 13). The Christian may be "strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy" (Col. 1 : 11).

[3] Sin, likewise, *inflames* the soul, until it is consumed as with fire. It is *fever* (8 : 14). Paul refers to such a case, when pleading for continency, he declares that "it is better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor. 7 : 9). "I lie among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men" (Ps. 57 : 4), said the Psalmist. Peter describes such men as "creatures without reason, born mere animals —men that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes revelling in their love-feasts, having their eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2 : 12–14). Well did the Wise Man ask, of such, "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched?" (Prov. 6 : 27, 28).

Yet another source of feverishness in the soul is "the love of money" (1 Tim. 6 : 10), which "is a root of all kinds of evil." "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6 : 9).

Second Day.—The Effects of Sin (8 : 23–9 : 8).

Sin affects every department of life, from the centre to the circumference, and this is illustrated in the second group of miracles here recorded, showing:

(*a*) Physical disturbance—in the tempest (8 : 23–27).
(*b*) Mental derangement—in the demoniac (8 : 28–34).
(*c*) Spiritual defilement—in the palsied man (9 : 1–8).

Jesus shows His ability to rectify each of these disturbed conditions.

[4] "A great tempest" (8 : 23) at His word of command, becomes "a great calm" (v. 26). He who has power to thus still the storm upon the sea, has power no less to bring about the "great calm" in a soul that is swept by surges of passion. At Kermanshah, Persia, recently, a Kurdish highwayman, named Abbaskhan, who had lived a very vile life, and had committed more murders and outrages than he himself could count, one day, coming upon this account of the stilling of the tempest, was convinced of the deity of Jesus, and resolved to renounce all to follow Him. And this he has done, despite a terrible storm of persecution, through which he has been led in triumph and has been baptized with the new name of Abdul Masih (servant of Christ). Is such a miraculous mastery over the power of sin in a human soul a whit less marvellous than that over the physical forces of nature?

[5] The pathetic condition of a mind unhinged (8 : 28), presents a fitting companion picture to be put alongside of that of the disturbed powers of the material world. And here in the domain of mind, as well, does Christ show Himself to be the supreme Master. One word in the uncanny speech of the demoniacs is suggestive of that "far off, divine event," when all wrongs will at length be righted and the King Himself will come to His own: it is the clause, "*before the time*" (v. 29). Even demons are well aware that a limit is fixed, beyond which the adversary will not be allowed to go. "Therefore, re-

joice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them, Woe for the earth and for the sea; because the devil is gone down unto you, *having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time*" (Rev. 12: 12). Looking forward to the day of final deliverance, our Lord Himself exclaims, "I beheld Satan fallen like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10: 18). And this was said when the Seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Thy name" (v. 17).

[6] But, deeper down than physical environment or mental condition, Jesus must go to the seat of sin, in the soul itself. In the case of the man who was so sick of the palsy (9: 1) as to be too helpless to put himself within the reach of healing, Jesus lays His finger upon the very source of the sickness, when He says, "Son, be of good cheer; thy *sins are forgiven*" (9: 2).

Thus from centre to circumference, the King undertakes to counteract the effects of sin and to restore every department of life, both without and within.

Third Day.—Sin's Remedy: Life (9: 9–34; 12: 9–13).

Set in the midst of this series of mighty works, evidencing the divine power of the King, the writer puts in his own portrait, as he appeared at the crisis point when turning from death to life. Was ever the story of a conversion told with more sublime simplicity? He presents himself, in company with "publicans and sinners" (v. 10), as a living witness of the power of the physician to heal the sin-sick soul.

The instances which immediately follow, reveal the King as the Lord and giver of life, and that in two degrees: [8] the first case, that of youth with life already gone (9: 18); [9] the other that of the mature woman,

with the life-tide ebbing fast (9 : 20). And the King reveals the secret source of that which alone can counteract death, "the wages of sin" (Rom. 6 : 23): "I came that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10 : 10). What science fails even to define, Jesus has completely at His command.

This supremacy of Life over death covers the entire range of the senses. Each gate that had been captured by the enemy is now recovered :

[9] First, EYE-GATE opens at the touch of the King (9 : 27–31). "Two blind men followed them, crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David. And when He was come unto the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened."

Yet another case is cited (20 : 29–34) where two other blind men receive their sight at His touch. The difference between the two cases is, that in the latter case, no injunction of secrecy is laid upon them, and the men forthwith become His followers.

[10] Likewise must MOUTH-GATE be brought under the Master's complete control. One whose tongue had been holden by a demon is brought to Jesus and instantly the bond is broken. It is probable that in this case EAR-GATE, too, at the same time gave way at the approach of the King, for so closely are these two gates of the heart-citadel connected, that they open or close together. In a similar case recorded in Mark 7 : 35, in noting the result it is said that "his ears were opened and the bond of his tongue was loosed."

[11] In the case of the man with a withered hand

(12 : 9), Jesus proves His power over the sense of TOUCH, in like manner, by a mere word. "Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth and it was restored whole, as the other."

[12] Another case occurs (12 : 22) where three of the senses are affected and all are forthwith restored—sight, hearing and speech.

Thus, with the single exception of smell, Jesus here gives a demonstration of His supreme control over all the senses, in redeeming the soul from the effects of sin.

Fourth Day.—Providing For "His Own" and Preserving Life (14 : 13–36).

Rights entail responsibilities. He who can command must also needs provide. The King cannot suffer his subjects to suffer while he has an ample supply. The feeding of the multitude is but a slight suggestion of a process which is going on all the while upon a vast scale under the King's supervision. He spreads a table every day for the multitude. The valleys are filled with corn, the hillsides are covered with cattle, trees and vines are laden with fruit, the earth yields its increase continually at His command alone.

> "Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
> And back of the flour the mill,
> And back of the mill are the sun and the shower,
> The rain and the Father's will."

And not only does He furnish this feast of material good things, but food for thought and the Bread of Life for the sustenance of the soul all come from Him.

[13] It is surely significant that of all the thirty-four

recorded miracles wrought by our Lord, when on earth, this of the feeding of the 5,000 is the only one found in all four versions of the gospel. It is in fact a picture of the world in miniature. It presents the greatest problem in the world, that of the evangelization of the world. And it sets forth the Master's own method of solving the problem.

[14] What wonder that the nation which was wearily waiting for a Deliverer to appear and help throw off the galling yoke of Rome, should have been ready to hail Jesus as King, while utterly misconceiving the nature of His kingdom. His refusal of the proposal must have staggered even His own body-guard. Hence, how fitting that there should follow that very night a fresh manifestation of His might as He comes walking over the waves (14 : 22) and to Peter and the rest proof is given of His power to suspend even the law of gravitation. "And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (14 : 32, 33).

Fifth Day.—Extending His Blessings to the Gentiles (15 : 21–39).

"To the Jew first" (Rom. 2 : 10) was the order of Jesus' mission. "He came unto His own," and only when "His own received Him not" (John 1 : 11) did He, as Paul did afterwards, turn unto the Gentiles (Acts 13 : 46).

[15] Only on a few occasions did he go beyond the borders of His native land. "Our Lord sprung out of Judah" (Heb. 7 : 14). Jesus was a Jew. The Chosen Race had a special claim upon Him. But He would toler-

ate no false pretense. None save a Jew had any claim upon Him as the "Son of David" (v. 22) and this the Canaanitish woman (15 : 21) must be made to understand, before she could share in the blessings which He was ready to extend to all alike. So long as she employed a title to which she had no claim, Jesus "answered her not a word" (v. 23). And when the disciples interfered and would have gotten rid of her, by yielding to her importunity, He made it plain that His mission was primarily, to "the house of Israel." But when the woman worshipped Him as her "Lord," the case was different and she not only got all that she asked and *carte-blanche* to ask what she would ever after, but, also highest commendation for her "great faith." "To the Greek also" grace is made to abound. Gentile, as well as Jew, shares in the redemption purchased by Christ. "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2 : 11). The Christ extends the blessings of His kingdom alike to all.

[16] And this is to be no mere exception. It is the opening of the gateway to the whole Gentile world. "He went from the borders of Tyre and came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. . . . In those days when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, He called unto Him His disciples and said unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days and have nothing to eat" (Mark 7 : 31–8 : 10). Then He proceeds to do for this company of 4,000 (15 : 29), what He had previously done for the 5,000 men of His own nation, thus making it plain that He is qualified to provide for the life of all alike, even as He also was to die to redeem all from the death of sin.

Sixth Day.—The Key to Power (17 : 9–27).

The next of the works of power, as in the two preceding, occurs outside the borders of Jewry.

[17] In the case of the epileptic boy (17 : 14) not a single sense, merely, had been impaired but all are affected. Even the elements of water and fire seem to have conspired to visit upon him the dire effects of sin. It is the first instance explicitly recorded where the disciples had attempted to use the power which their King had committed to them, to destroy the works of Satan. And the result had been a miserable failure. They had yet to learn, that the power of God could be released only by the power of prayer. Here is the key to the omnipotent forces of the kingdom. And the King commits that golden key to His subjects.

[18] Once more does the King give proof of His power to provide all needed resources. And at the same time He proves His loyalty to the powers that be (17 : 24). To meet the demand of the publican for the payment of the personal tax of Peter and Himself, He sends the fisherman disciple to the sea and from the mouth of the first fish that takes the hook, is taken the shekel that is required. This gives a hint as to the boundless resources at the King's command.

Seventh Day.—The Curse of Fruitlessness (21 : 18–22).

[19] Twice only, in all the range of His thirty-four recorded works of power, did our Lord employ that power to destroy—once in the realm of animal life, when He condemned the breach of the Mosaic law by driving the swine into the sea (Matt. 8 : 32); once only in the vegetable

kingdom, when He cursed the fruitless fig-tree and it withered away.

[20] The fruitless fig-tree with its false pretense is a picture of the Jewish nation (21 : 18). Jesus reserves His most withering condemnation for all sham and hypocrisy. This instance stands as a frontispiece to the woes which He utters immediately afterwards in the temple (ch. 24), and the tribulations which He foretells (ch. 25). As such, it amounts to a startling warning and prophecy.

[21] Of all His miracles, the Resurrection affords the supreme proof of our Lord's kingly power. The record of it, occupying the last chapter of this book, is given with a sublime simplicity to which no comment can possibly add:

"Behold there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and His raiment white as snow; and for fear of Him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the woman, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, even as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell the disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you" (28: 2–7).

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY VI

THE NEW SERVICE: WORKS OF POWER

First Day.

How many miracles are given in this book? What their scope? What aspect of sin does leprosy illustrate? How treated? What signified by palsy? How remedied? What are some of the sources of soul-fever?

Second Day.

In what various ways are the effects of sin shown and how counteracted?

Third Day.

How is brought out the completeness of Christ's restoration of the bodily powers?

Fourth Day.

How is the King's power to provide for His subjects demonstrated? How on a far larger scale does the feeding of the multitude still continue?

What occasion was there for His walking on the water?

Fifth Day.

Why does He apparently repulse the Canaanitish woman?

Why feed a multitude a second time?

Sixth Day.

In what respect does the case of the epileptic boy differ from all the preceding miracles? On what point particularly in the method of dealing with it does our Lord fix the attention of the disciples?

What is the significance of the way in which Jesus meets the demand for His tax to the state?

Seventh Day.

On what occasions did Jesus ever destroy property? Why?

STUDY VII

THE NEW SERVICE (*Continued*)

His Words of Wisdom (*Ch. 5 and following.*)

First Day.—The Apostles' Commission (ch. 10.)

THE first of the words recorded in this book is the Great Manifesto (5–7), which stands by itself and has already been treated. After the seals have been put upon this great State paper, in the first series of mighty works, which occupy chapters 8 and 9, the Twelve are appointed and their commission is given. While primarily intended for the King's first Body-Guard, this document extends much farther, even to the end of the present age.

The first paragraph (vs. 5–15) is confined to the period up to the Crucifixion. "To the Jew first" is the order to be strictly adhered to; during this period no exception is to be made, even, of the Samaritan, half-Jew though he be. The message is clearly defined: it is not the Gospel of the grace of God, but the proclamation that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and this is duly attested by miracle. The messengers are to go only to the worthy and where they are wanted.

The next paragraph (16–23) deals with an entirely different set of conditions. It distinctly contemplates the troublous forty years between Pentecost and the destruction of Jerusalem. Now the messengers may look out, not for friends but only for foes, alike with Gentile and with Jew. That may be expected now which never had occurred before and never could occur again: a Christian scourged

in a synagogue! In no other period, either, would Jews and Gentiles unite in persecuting the followers of Christ. And, since nowhere on earth would there be found a "City of Israel," after Titus' "Eagles" had perched round about Jerusalem and pounced upon their prey, clearly all this could apply only to that earlier period when the messengers were to fairly "flee" from city to city with their message of the kingdom. During all this awful ordeal of persecution, a new Ally could be counted upon, even "the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (v. 20).

But on beyond the set time of the nemesis which would overtake the Chosen People, the passing away of their Temple and the obliteration of their national existence, the King forecastes (vs. 24–42) a further period, stretching away down through the centuries until the end of the age. In it, every disciple may have in common with the Master, not only the truth which is to be everywhere proclaimed (v. 27) but also, the reproach which that teaching will inevitably entail (v. 25) and, likewise, at last the "reward" (v. 42). This identification of the servant with his Master is to be through the "Cross" (v. 38), and whenever that cross appears, families are inevitably divided. For souls must be dealt with singly.

Second Day.—The Nature of the Kingdom—in Cipher (ch. 13).

From the hour of His rejection by "His own," when the works which He wrought through the agency of the Spirit of God are attributed to Satanic influence, our Lord changes His method of unfolding the Truth. Thenceforth from eyes diseased, He screens the light; "and without a parable spake He nothing unto them" (13 : 34). He communicates in cipher, so that they who do not wish to

understand may not incur increasing guilt, while they who truly wish to know may perceive the more by searching out the hidden meanings. In this first series, of seven, the nature and progress of the kingdom to the end of the age is unfolded. Four are uttered out of doors and the latter three in the inner circle of Peter's house. That there is a logical sequence throughout the series, there can be no doubt, but it is necessary to beware of fanciful interpretation. Views vary very widely.

Bengel, adopting the historic-prophetical view, regards [1] *the Sower* as descriptive of the sowing of the Word of Life in the times of Christ and His immediate apostles; [2] *the Tares*, as referring to the period immediately following, when watchfulness against false doctrines began to diminish and heresies to crop up; [3] *the Mustard Seed*, describing the time of Constantine, when the Church, instead of even seeming to need support, evidently gave it, and the great men of the earth took shelter under its protection; [4] *the Leaven*, setting forth the diffusion of the true religion throughout the whole world; [5] *the Hid Treasure*, signifying—as in the Apocalypse (12 : 6), by the woman fleeing to the wilderness—the hidden state of the church; [6] *the Pearl*, standing for the glorious day when the church is esteemed above all else, and Satan is bound; [7] *the Drag-net*, indicating the ultimate confusion, separation and judgment.

Trench, rejecting all such interpretation, sees in these parables, a setting forth not of facts, but rather of ideas and laws of the church's history: [1] *In the Sower*, the causes of the failure and success with which the gospel meets when preached; [2] *In the Tares*, the obstacles to the internal development of Christ's kingdom, even after the church has been hedged in from the world, are traced

to their true authors, with a warning against methods whereby men might attempt to overcome them; [3] *The Mustard Seed* and [4] *The Leaven* show, the first, the outward and the second the inward might of the kingdom and both forecast the ultimate triumph; [5] *The Hid Treasure* and [6] *The Pearl*, show the relation of the kingdom to every man subjectively and individually, its supreme worth and how those who have discovered its worth will be willing to forget all else therefor; [7] *The Drag-net* indicates the entire separation from evil, which it is right to desire, but not by self-willed efforts prematurely to attempt to bring about, anticipating which, each should use all available means of grace, awaiting the separation of the precious from the vile.

Others regard "the kingdom of the heavens" as equivalent to the visible church or to "Christendom," with its commingling of the true and the false. In the first parable there is no mention made of the kingdom, for this does not appear until first the King has come and sown *the seed* which develops into "the Sons of the kingdom." Only one-fourth of the good seed finds good soil, but it falls alike on all—the hard-hearted, the shallow-hearted and the half-hearted, as well as the whole-hearted. The good and the evil are found commingled within the same enclosure from the very first until the end, like *wheat and darnel*. The external growth is phenomenal, as that of the *mustard seed*, and many flock in for shelter. Yet, throughout, there are elements of corruption at work, like *leaven*. He who sows the good seed, who bides the harvest for the burning of the darnel, who sets the mustard, is the same who finds *the treasure hid*, and sells all to buy the field, the same who, as a merchant, finds *the pearl* of great price and sacrifices everything in order to purchase it.

But he does not appear in connection with the leavening process, where "a woman" is the agent, or in the final separating of what the great *drag-net* brings in, with which "the angels" have to do.

In the Treasure may be seen the mystery of Israel, the "peculiar treasure" (Ex. 19 : 5 ; Ps. 135 : 4). He died for that nation (John 11 : 51). Yet, despite the fact that He redeemed Israel, it is a treasure still hidden and not yet come into His possession. "I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye be not wise in your own conceit, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in ; and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11 : 25). That hid treasure shall surely yet be brought to light.

There is yet another "mystery" to be unfolded and quite distinct from that of Israel. It is that of which Paul writes to the Ephesians in the third chapter of his letter, "the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies might be made known *through the church* the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3 : 9–11). The church is the pearl which the heavenly Merchantman sought and found and bought. "He loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5 : 25). Where there is such diversity of interpretation, the need is all the greater for each student of the Word to depend upon the Spirit whose office it is to guide into all the truth (John 16 : 13).

Third Day.—Illustrating the Effect of Division Among Disciples (ch. 18).

On the return from the north the disciples had been disputing. Several of them had been signally preferred,

in being allowed to witness the glory of the Transfiguration Mount. Secrets had been entrusted to them in which the others were not to share until after the crucifixion. The question of preëminence had naturally arisen. Division threatened. Yet the Lord holds His peace. He had not interfered at the time. After getting back to Capernaum, however, He asks as to what they had been reasoning on the way and when they are dumb, setting a little child in their midst, He shows them the disastrous effect of the self-seeking spirit, alike on themselves and upon others. He illustrates this by two beautiful parables.

[8] The little one whom they thus may make to stumble is like a Sheep Astray (12–14) to whom the Father's heart goes out as that of a shepherd to the one sheep that has lost its way. And since the Father's sympathy is thus called out to this one more than to all the ninety and nine who have not strayed, it is a fearful thing to be the means of making another to stumble; better far to part with that which has made one's self to be a stumbling block, no matter if it be a hand or a foot or an eye. And all the worse, if that other be a brother. If the fault seems to be altogether his, it yet remains for the one aggrieved to point out the grievance and to be forgiving. To this willingness to forgive there is to be absolutely no limit. For any refusal to forgive another cuts off one's own hope of forgiveness. This is illustrated by [9] the parable of the King's Steward, (23–35) who after having had his own debt cancelled, oppressed his fellow servants and was himself turned over to the tormentors until he should pay his debt. Thus the Master shows the reflex effect upon one's self, as before He had shown the direct effect upon others, of becoming a cause of stumbling by self-seeking.

Fourth Day.—Suggesting the Sort of Service the King Requires (chs. 20 and 21).

Of the other eight parables that are given by Matthew all of them spoken not long before the end, three relate more especially to the character of service which the King requires, and the others to the consummation of the age.

[10] The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (20 : 1–16) has puzzled many. It occurs in the course of the conversation following the incident of the Rich Young Ruler, when the disciples had asked what they would get for what they had given up. It is intended to illustrate the statement with which it both begins and ends: "Many shall be last that are first, and first that are last." It asserts the divine sovereignty of God, but this involves no unreasonable despotism. Those who are called in late, are not to blame that they had not been called before; all come when they are called. The last poor cannibal of the Dark Continent who responds to the call of the Householder, will be treated just as well as the first apostle. For the test of service is qualitative and not quantitative. This much is quite clear, that there is plenty of work, that the Lord is anxious for more workers and that none will be at any disadvantage who promptly respond to the call to service, no matter when the call may come.

[11] The meaning of the parable of the two Sons (21 : 28–32) is explained by the Lord Himself. Publicans and harlots who had at first refused, afterwards turned and went to work, while the class who made loudest profession failed to do the works of righteousness.

[12] This latter class is still further described in the parable of the Householder (21 : 33–46), who sends first His servants and at last His own son, seeking the fruits, but only to be repulsed and killed.

Fifth Day.—Woes.

Of the last group of parables the meaning is made very plain. The antagonism between Jesus and the Jewish authorities is nearing its culmination. [13] The Parable of the Marriage Feast (22 : 1–14) shows how the Chosen People had been given every possible opportunity and how, having willfully rejected the long-suffering overtures of God, they would incur destruction, both of themselves and of their Holy City. Another nation, "redeemed out of every nation" (Rev. 5 : 9), would take their place. And yet, at last, the test will be applied to every guest, individually, and only he will be allowed to partake who is "clothed with the garment of salvation—covered with the robe of righteousness" (Is. 61 : 10).

Then follows the threefold assault by (1) the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians jointly, as to the duty to the state, (2) the Sadducees, as to the marriage tie, beyond the grave; and (3) the Pharisee lawyer, as to the "great commandment in the law." After answering them every one with wonderful wisdom, Jesus turns the tables by putting a question, to which "no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions." So still, as in that day and until the end of time, do the enemies of the cross of Christ bring their conundrums, of secularism, rationalism and formalism. Sooner or later, all questions resolve themselves to that concerning the Christ and upon the answer to that question must depend the weal or woe of men.

Jesus now openly exposes the Pharisees (ch. 23) and pours out the seven vials of His wrath—"the wrath of the lamb" (Rev. 6 : 16). Yet in wrath, He remembers mercy, and upon the lurid background of these woes, is

presented the tenderest of pictures as the King is seen weeping over Jerusalem. Once more salvation walks hand in hand with judgment.

Sixth Day.—Warnings (24–25).

When our Lord uttered these warnings of the tribulations about to befall the Chosen Nation, and of those yet more dire calamities that are just as surely to come later upon all the world, not a cloud could be discerned on the horizon by any other eye. All seemed serene, in both the political and religious situation. Even those who listened to these awesome predictions little realized what a storm was about to burst. Within the inner circle, he now utters four parables, all of which look on towards the end of the age.

[14] That of the *Stewards* (24 : 45–51) emphasizes the need of eternal vigilance. "The faithful and wise Servant" is contrasted with "the evil Servant" and the penalty of unfaithfulness is plainly shown to be perdition.

[15] The parable of *The Ten Virgins* (25 : 1–13) treats of the personal relation of the church to her Head. The test of real discipleship is not so much in the beginning as in the continuing unto the end. The Christian is to be like the Christ, in being "The light of the world" (Cf. Matt. 5 : 14 with John 8 : 12). It is at night that there is need of the light. None can obtain it from another; it must be a personal possession. "To them that wait for Him, shall Christ appear, a second time, unto salvation" (Heb. 9 : 28).

[16] The parable of the *Talents* (14–30) relates to action while the preceding parable has rather to do with the attitude. Talents can be held only as they are used. "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it

among yourselves as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4 : 10).

[17] The last of the parables, that of *The Sheep and the Goats*, (31–46) treats of the relation of the nations to the King of Kings. It anticipates the Great Assize, the Judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. 20 : 11–15).

Seventh Day.—The Great Commission (28 : 18–28).

The Great Commission is the Magna Charta of the Christian Church—her "Marching Orders," unto the uttermost parts of the earth and unto the end of the age. Sublime in its simplicity, this great imperative, "Go Ye," is framed in the all-embracing Love of God for a lost world :

Its height :

Its breadth : ALL

Its depth :

Its length :

AUTHORITY hath been given unto Me in heaven and earth : GO YE, therefore, and disciple
NATIONS, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe
THINGS whatsoever I commanded you : and Lo, I am with you
THE DAYS, even unto the end of the age (Matt. 28 : 18–20).

This Royal Command, "Go Ye," expresses the centrifugal law of the Spiritual world. It is the necessary complement of the centripetal law, "Come unto Me" (Matt. 11 : 20). These two forever act and react to maintain the equilibrium in the Kingdom of God.

This great word which brings the book to a close, recalls the opening sentence, "The book of the Generation of the Son of Abraham" (1 : 1). To Abraham had the promise been given, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22 : 18). "Now to Abraham were the

promises spoken and to his seed. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many: but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3 : 16). In the Son of Abraham that promise finds fulfillment unto "all the nations" (28 : 19). Thus the cycle is completed—God's purpose now becomes apparent and His promise is thus fulfilled.

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY VII

THE NEW SERVICE: WORDS OF WISDOM

First Day.

How is the Apostle's Commission distinguished from the Great Commission?

Note the scope of each of the three paragraphs and give the gist of each.

Second Day.

What do you understand to be the nature and purpose of parable?

What do the seven parables of the first group cover?

Of the various interpretations given, which appears to you most satisfactory?

Third Day.

What was the occasion for the eighth and ninth parables?

What the special point of each?

Fourth Day.

What circumstances called forth the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard? What the chief point?

What called forth that of The Two Sons?

What the chief point?

What is further brought out in the parable of The Householder?

Fifth Day.

What is the application of the parable of The Marriage Feast?

What three assaults are made upon Jesus, and how does He meet each?

What words does He utter?

Sixth Day.

What occasion did there appear then to be for the predictions of impending calamity?

How were these fulfilled?

What is yet to be expected?

What does the parable of the Servants teach? The Virgins? The Talents? The Sheep and the Goats?

Seventh Day.

What four dimensions of the Divine Love are indicated in the Great Commission?

What connection is there between the first and the last verse of the book?

STUDY VIII

HIS PROPITIATION—AS PRIEST

(16 : 13–28 : 20)

"Not in soft speech is told the earthly story,
Love of all loves, that showed Thee for an hour,
Shame was Thy kingdom and reproach Thy glory,
Death Thine eternity, the Cross Thy power."

First Day.—Forecasting the Cross (16 : 21 ; 26 : 2).

(1) BEFORE He can become King, He must first perform the priestly office. It is only by way of the Altar that He can ascend the Throne. He can reach the Crown only by way of the Cross. Thus only can He be forevermore "a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6 : 13). There are five specific predictions of the Crucifixion recorded, but even as far back as when first sending forth the Twelve He had given a vague indication when He said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me" (10 : 38). Just before the Transfiguration, when Peter had made his great confession of faith in the Messiahship of Jesus, the first clear reference to the coming cross is made. Then Peter rebukes Him and Jesus plainly tells the earthly-minded disciple that he is "a stumbling-block," reminding the disciples that none who follow Him can avoid the cross.

(2) Immediately after the glimpse of glory had been given to the trio on the mount, once more He points the three witnesses on to the time when the Son of Man

would "be risen from the dead" (17 : 9), while at the same time He reminds them that He must "also suffer" (17 : 12).

(3) Again, in Galilee, on the way up to Jerusalem, Jesus repeats the prediction, this time to all of the Twelve and in more minute detail (17 : 22), mentioning "the third day" as the time when He would be raised up.

(4) Again when approaching Jerusalem, He takes the Twelve aside and tells them explicitly (20 : 17–19) that Jew and Gentile would combine to put Him to death, and that most cruelly, but through the gloom of it all He looks forward still to the sunrise beyond; "the third day He shall be raised up."

(5) At length, two days before the crucifixion, for the last time, He makes the announcement (26 : 2), speaking this time only of the cross, whereas on no previous occasion of the four, had He spoken of the Crucifixion, without coupling with it the Resurrection. But He is entering now into the deep darkness which culminated when the Father's face was withdrawn, when "He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5 : 21). It is the eve of the Passover, and He identifies Himself with the Pascal Lamb—"The Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13 : 8). The shadows of the Cross which had been cast back along the track of His life are now closing in about Him. The Sun is entering into eclipse, but only to emerge after a little, "with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4 : 2).

Second Day.—Anointed Unto Burial (26 : 6).

Despite the deliberate determination of the Sanhedrim that—the arrest of the King should not occur "during the feast, lest a turmoil arise among the people," that was the

very time when the hour of God's purpose was to strike. And the reversing of the decision of men, the carrying out of the plan of God, was to turn upon the expression of a woman's lavish love, when Mary broke the alabaster box of spikenard over Jesus. Stirred to indignation at what appeared to his cupidity as nothing less than shameless waste, Judas set in motion the train of events that culminated in the crucifixion.

The Pascal Lamb must be slain at the Passover Feast. Thus is fulfilled what had been foreshadowed for 1,500 years in the greatest of the annual feasts at Jerusalem.

Third Day.—"As a Sheep Before Its Shearers" (27 : 1–31).

The antagonism between the Jewish leaders and "The King of the Jews" was inevitable and irreconcilable. Darkness and light could not coexist. Since that Sabbath day when Jesus sanctioned the plucking of the corn by His followers, to satisfy their hunger, and afterwards in the synagogue healed the man with a withered hand (12 : 1–14), and later cast out the demon, when the Pharisees attributed His undeniable power to Satanic agency (12 : 22–37) the struggle had never ceased. It appeared again when Pharisees and Sadducees combined in demanding of Him a sign from heaven, and, flatly refusing, He withdrew (16 : 1–4); afterwards He had warned His followers against the leaven of these leaders (16 : 5–12). Then came the combined attack of Herodians, Sadducees and Pharisees, with their puzzling questions, as to taxation, marriage relations beyond the grave and the paramount requirement of the Law, all of which He had met with the answer of an unanswerable question concerning Himself (22 : 1–46). After this He sternly denounced the Phari-

sees in scathing terms, openly before the people as well as before His disciples (23 : 1–30). And now, at length, has conspiracy come to a head. Chief priests, under Caiaphas' direction, take counsel to take Jesus by subtlety and put Him to death (26 : 1–5). Judas has taken the fateful step, in betraying the Saviour (26 : 47–56). Pilate has passed sentence (27 : 1–26). With Jew and Gentile alike arrayed against Him, He fearlessly asserts His claim to be the King. "He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted, He opened not His mouth, as a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isa. 53 : 7).

Fourth Day.—Offering up Himself (27 : 45–53).

Jesus came not only to preach the Gospel, but that there might be a Gospel to preach. Our High Priest is at once the offerer and the offering. "He offered Himself without blemish unto God" (Heb. 9 : 14). "We behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste of death for every man" (Heb. 2 : 9). "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross" (Phil. 2 : 8). And by bearing the cross for us, Jesus bore the cross away. That implement of most cruel torture has been absolutely abolished, wherever Christ has become known. Indeed He has converted the symbol of shame into the badge of highest honour. "Such a priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like (other) high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered

up Himself" (Heb. 7 : 26–28). "We have such an High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8 : 1).

Fifth Day.—Risen From Among the Dead (ch. 28).

The very precautions taken by the Roman authorities—in placing a military guard and putting upon the stone covering the entrance the government seal, to break which entailed the death penalty—all these precautions but served as additional proofs of the Resurrection. The testimony of the guard as to what was said to have taken place while they were asleep, inadmissible as such evidence would be in any court on earth, only served yet further to attest the fact. The testimony of a great cloud of witnesses, of whom many sealed their word with the blood of martyrdom, left no reasonable room for doubt, that He not only rose from the grave, but likewise through the parted clouds passed into heaven itself.

He died; He arose. These two hemispheres constitute the full-orbed Gospel of the Grace of God. The under hemisphere has its pole in Calvary; the upper, in heaven itself. He who as the suffering Saviour underwent for us the humiliation of the cross, is now exalted to be "the Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6 : 13), our Sovereign King forevermore.

Sixth Day.—The Portrait in Perspective.

Jesus the Christ, what a picture of the Messiah is here presented—at once King and Prophet and Priest! Descended along the royal line, born in royal David's city, hailed with royal homage, hated of a royal rival, heralded by His Forerunner, anointed and divinely sealed, fiercely

assailed by the Prince of this world, but emerging triumphant from the awful ordeal, the King indeed !

But, before His royal rule can be recognized, He must don the Prophet's robe and proclaim the basis of the New Kingdom, indicating how the New Man under the New Law is to live the New Life. Then upon this Great State Paper, the seals of supernatural power are put, attesting the supremacy of Eternal Life over every phase of sin's power and pollution and penalty. He further utters words of wisdom, describing the character of the Kingdom and forecasting the final outcome of His reign.

Then, having filled the Prophet's rôle, knowing that there could be no crown without the cross, He performs the functions of the Priest, offering up Himself as the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

And after all is finished, He rises Victor from the dark domain and manifests Himself as the King again, giving commandment to His followers before going up to take His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hallelujah, what a Saviour !

A Summary of Matthew

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Key: "Behold My Servant!" (12:18)

Chapter Titles		The Messiah		Contents		(A) Works of Power	(B) Words of Wisdom
		I				*Miracles* showing the Supremacy of Divine Life over human sin and its consequences.	*Parables, etc.* unfolding the nature, purpose and outcome of the Kingdom.
Generation	1	1 (1:1–4:11) HIS PREPARATION AS KING	1	(1) His Pedigree. (2) His Birth.	1		
Herod	1	2	2	(3) His Royal Homage. (4) His Royal Rival.	2		
Baptist	1	3	3	(5) His Fore-Runner. (6) His Anointing.	3		
Wilderness	1	4	4	(7) His Testing.	4		
Blessed	3	5	II	(1) His Messengers. (2) His Proclamation.	5		I THE GREAT STATE PAPER. (a) The New Man, (1–10) under (b) The New Law, lives (c) The New Life, (17–48)
Secret	4	6	(4:12–16:12)	"	6		
The Narrow Gate	13	7	HIS	"	7	The New Service: (1) Sin's loathsomeness—leprosy (1) (2) Sin's helplessness—palsy (5) (3) Sin's Restlessness—fever (14) (4) Physical disturbance—tempest (23) (5) Mental derangement—demoniacs (28)	
I Will	3	8		" (3) His Royal Seals: (A) Works of Power	8		
Mercy	13	9	PROGRAM AS PROPHET		9	(6) Spiritual defilement—sins forgiven (1) (7) Life renewed—the old (20) (8) Life Restored—the young (18) (9) Vision restored—2 blind (27) (10) Voice and hearing—dumb (32)	
Authority	1	10			10		
Rest	28	11			11		
Beelzebub	24	12			12	(11) Vigour of action—touch (9) (12) Vision, voice and hearing (22)	II "THE MYSTERIES." (1) The sower (1) (2) The Seed (24) (3) Mustard (31) (4) The leaven (33) (5) Treasure (44) (6) Pearl (45) (7) The net (47)
The Kingdom	11	13		(B) Words of Wisdom.	13		
5000	21	14			14	(13) Providing food for His own —5000 (13) (14) Protecting life—Peter (22)	
Crumbs	27	15			15	(15) Blessing Gentiles—Caananite (21)	
The Keys	19	16			16	(16) Providing food for others —4000 (29)	
Transfigured	2	17	III	(1) Forecasting the Cross, 1st Prediction (21) 2d " (12) 3d " (22)	17	(17) Restoring consciousness—epilepsy (14) (18) Providing funds—12x (24)	
Little Child	4	18	(16:13–28:20)		18		(8) The one sheep astray (12) (9) The unforgiving servant (23)
Eternal Life	16	19	HIS		19		
Last—First	10	20	PROPITIATION AS PRIEST	4th " (17)	20	(19) Vision restored again —2 blind (29)	(10) The householder hiring labourers (1)
Hosanna	9	21		(2) Approaching the Capital.	21	(20) Condemning fruitlessness —fig tree (18)	(11) The two sons (28) (12) Householder seeking fruit (33)
Questions	46	22			22		(13) Marriage feast (1)
Woe	13	23			23		[WOES]
Tribulation	21	24			24		[WARNINGS] (14) The faithful servant (45)
The Throne	31	25			25		(15) The ten virgins (1) (16) The ten talents (14) (17) The sheep and goats (31)
The Cup	27	26		5th Prediction (2) (3) Anointed unto Burial.	26		
The Veil	51	27		(4) Offering Himself up.	27		
All	18	28		(5) Raised up to Reign.	28	(21) The Resurrection (1)	III THE GREAT COMMISSION (18–20)

POINTS FOR REVIEW

STUDY VIII

HIS PROPITIATION AS PRIEST

First Day.

What other office must the King perform before coming to the crown?

On what occasions does He forecast His crucifixion?

Second Day.

How was the determination of the Jews to defer the death of Jesus until after the Passover defeated?

Third Day.

Trace the development of antagonism to Jesus through this book.

What prophecies of Isaiah are fulfilled in the trial of Jesus?

Fourth Day.

What was the prime purpose for which Jesus came into the world?

How has He transformed the Cross?

Fifth Day.

How did the Jewish and Roman authorities make more sure the evidence of Jesus' resurrection?

What two great hemispheres go to make up the full-orbed truth of the Gospel?

Sixth Day.

Go over the main points of the portrait as a whole.

Seventh Day.

Review the book in outline.

PART SECOND

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATIONS

Arranged for Daily Use in the Quiet Hour

INTRODUCTORY

THESE Meditations were not originally prepared for publication. In passing them on for whatever benefit they may be to others, the hope is that they may serve to suggest how an average Christian, be he ever so busy, may yet, by the simple method[1] here applied, get day by day his daily bread from the inexhaustible supply of the Word of God. There is no greater need to-day than to translate the Truth as it is in Jesus, into the every-day life of men. To vitally relate the will of God, as revealed in His Holy Word, to "the common round, the daily task," that cannot but strengthen and sweeten life in every way. And many a man fails in this from sheer lack of some such plan as is here applied, which while adequate is yet not too elaborate. If the notes here given were more finished, they might not serve so well to stimulate those whom a less simple and more exacting method might deter. If they help to realize more practical results in daily, devotional Bible Study, they will have served their purpose.

[1] See page 15 for an explanation of the plan.

FIRST DAY

MATTHEW 1.

Title:

"*Generation*" (vs. 1, 17).

Thought:

In this compendium of history and prophecy, there is described the descent of Christ through David from Abraham (1–17) and His Birth (18–25).

Truth:

[*It is earnestly recommended that each one for himself dig as for hid treasure in quest of the truth embedded in the portion for each day,* BEFORE REFERRING TO THE NOTES HERE GIVEN.]

(1) "*The Son of David.*"

Lo, the King is coming! A royal procession, with monarchs in their regal robes and pomp of power, moves down the centuries towards the cradle of the Christ. No tolling of the death knell here is heard, as in the cemetery chapter, the fifth of Genesis ("and he died . . . died . . . died"), but chimes announce the birth of "the Heir of all things" (Heb. 1 : 2). Swiftly this procession of human life, with its lights and shadows, files by. The picture is sketched only in bare outline, omitting all details, the chief actors passing swiftly on without a halt until Bethlehem is reached. And there the procession pauses at

"A lowly cattle shed
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed.

(3, 5, 6, 16) "*Tamar* . . . *Rahab* . . . *Ruth* . . . *Bathsheba* . . . *Mary*."

Five women appear in this passion-play of human life and on most of them "the trail of the serpent" is seen. Through Rahab and Ruth we Gentiles are admitted to a share with the Royal Seed. "Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5 : 21). He came into contact with the taint of human heredity, in order that He might take out that taint. Have I let Him take it out of me?

(20) "*When he thought, behold an angel* . . . *saying, Fear not.*"

It pays to take time to think. What a fatal blunder Joseph would have made, had he acted on his first impulse. It is when I act without stopping to think that I make mistakes. Is it the habit of my life always to think before acting?

(23) "*Immanuel* . . . *God with us.*"

All time divides into three days: (1) "In the beginning, God" (Gen. 1 : 1), "God *for* us" (Rom. 8 : 31), "the Father of an infinite majesty"; (2) "God *with* us" (Matt. 1 : 23), "His only begotten Son, our Lord"; (3) "God *in* us" (1 Cor. 3 : 16; 2 Cor. 6 : 19), "The Holy Spirit, the Comforter." It is only as I enter into the rich possibilities of to-day, that I can appreciate the full significance of yesterday and the day before. Only as to-day I come to know the meaning of *God in me*, shall I fully realize what is wrapped up in that wonderful name, "*Immanuel*"; "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5 : 19). And as the fact of the earthly life of my Lord Jesus unfolds more and more fully to me, I shall come into the light of the third day, and

know beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in me (1 Cor. 3 : 16).

Text: [*Each one* should determine individually what is the special message to himself for the day. It may be that the light may flash from none of the truths suggested in these notes, but from some other passage. Let each one wait in quietness for the Spirit to reveal the message meant for himself. Of the several passages on which the mind may dwell in meditation, *check* on the margin the one which is borne in as the golden-text for "Daily Bread."]

Prayer:

Blessed Son of God, through whose infinite condescension we have become, by faith in Thee, sons of Abraham (Gal. 3 : 7), grant that "upon the Gentiles may come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus"; that they and we together may receive "the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3 : 14).

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

SECOND DAY

MATTHEW 2.

Title:

"*Herod*" (vs. 1, 3, 7, 15, etc.).

Thought:

The Magi having offered their homage to Jesus (1–12), Joseph is warned to flee into Egypt (13–15) and the jealousy of Herod flames forth in the slaughter of the innocents (16–23).

Truth:

(2) "*Where is He that is born King?*"

All men that are truly wise are still asking this same question, and among them the thoughtful men of the East. They of the Orient have taken up this query, "Where is the King?" an inquiry which grows out of this actual experience, "We have seen His star in the East," and is fast crystallizing into the purpose, "We are come to worship Him." Witness the present attitude of the "students" of Japan, China, India and other parts of the East. Am I showing as much of spiritual aspiration and persistence in pursuit of truth as these wise men of the East?

(5) "*The Prophet.*"

Revelation takes up the thread where science stops short. But the two coöperate; they do not conflict or compete. I need to know more of both. Am I studying both with due diligence?

(11) "*They fell down and worshipped Him.*"

The very first worship of Christ was by non-Christians. How charitable it should make us towards the men of the East, who have grown up among their heathen philosophies and idolatries and yet thus readily respond to so slight a knowledge of our Saviour! How much we may learn from them, of reverence in worship, as they "fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb"!

(11) "*And opening their treasures, they offered unto Him gifts.*"

The non-Christian does not have a cheap religion. He is not like the old deacon who said he thanked God that the gospel was free; he had been a member of the Church for thirty years and it had not cost him a cent. These "heathen" brought gifts as an essential part of their worship. The widow who "cast in two mites, which make a farthing," gave "all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:44). Reckoned according to the costliness of my gifts, how much is my worship worth?

Prayer:

O Thou who wast Thyself born in the East, look down in tender regard upon the people of the Orient, who to-day are turning their faces Christward. Having seen "the Star," may they soon come to see Thee, the King, that they and we may at length bow down in joyful worship at Thy feet and crown Thee Lord of all.

Through Thine own infinite mercy and grace,

Amen.

THIRD DAY

MATTHEW 3.

Title:

"*Baptist*" (v. 1).

Thought:

John baptizing (1–12), Jesus comes and receives not only the baptism of water but, likewise, of the Spirit (13–17).

Truth:

(3) "*The Voice.*"

A "voice" is not seen but heard; and that is suggestive of the attitude which the Christian should take. He who thus, in self-effacement, witnesses ever to the Truth as it is in Jesus, even though it be "in the wilderness," will find another witnessing to his spirit that he is a son of God (Rom. 8 : 16). Is this my usual experience?

(8) "*Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of repentance.*"

The one valid proof of a change of heart is a consequent change in character and conduct. If I am not more meek and gentle, more patient and long-suffering, more pure in heart and true in all the relations of life, it is worse than useless to say that I have received the Holy Spirit. For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5 : 22).

(14) "*I have need to be baptized of Thee.*"

If John had need, how much more have I! My unutterable need is itself a mute appeal to Him who alone can baptize in the Holy Spirit now, and who will one day, likewise, baptize "in fire" (v. 11). And God makes no "half-hinge." The very existence of the need implies the supply. Hence

> "My need and His great fullness meet
> And I have all."

(16) "*As a Dove.*"

As the lion, the king of the beasts of the earth, is taken as the symbol of the Son, so the most pure and gentle and sensitive of the birds of the heaven is chosen to be the symbol of the Spirit. At St. Petersburg, along the river Neva, flocks of birds feed upon the grain, quite undisturbed, for the peasants fear to touch them, lest they may do violence to the Holy Spirit. Am I as anxious to avoid grieving Him?

Prayer:

> "Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,
> With light and comfort from above,
> Be Thou our Guardian, Thou our Guide,
> O'er every thought and step preside.
>
> "Conduct us safe, conduct us far
> From every sin and hurtful snare;
> Lead us to Christ, the Living Way,
> Nor let us from His pastures stray.
>
> "Lead us to holiness, the road,
> That we must take to dwell with God,
> Lead us to God, our final rest,
> To be with Him forever blest."

FOURTH DAY

MATTHEW 4 : 1–11.

Title:

"*The Wilderness*" (v. 1).

Thought:

The threefold temptation successfully withstood by Jesus (1–12), upon John's arrest He withdraws to Galilee (13–16).

Truth;

(1) "*Jesus . . . the Spirit . . . the devil.*"

Here is the battle-field of human life. For every soul, two parties are contending. Every one must be subjected to the supreme test of choosing life or death.

> "Once to every man and nation
> Comes the moment to decide."

Even the Son of God could not become the Son of Man without undergoing this ordeal. Surely I cannot expect to be exempt. And, just as the South Sea Islanders hold that the strength of the vanquished enters into the victor, so not only should each victory help me some other to win, but it should help me the better to help some one else to win.

(1) "*Tempted.*"

He must be "tempted in all points like as we" (Heb. 4 : 15) in order that He may be in a position "to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2 : 18). Hence He runs the whole gauntlet of temptation. As with the Iron Duke, "the battle of Waterloo was won on the Rugby

football field." So Jesus "waged war by prearrangement" long before the Adversary attacked Him. He had put on "the whole armour of God" so as to be "able to withstand and, having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6 : 14, 15). "Truth . . . righteousness . . . the gospel . . . faith . . . salvation . . . the Word of God . . . prayer," all of these entered into the preparation which He had long been making against "the evil day." Let me look well to my armour and see whether any part be lacking and whether all is kept bright.

(3) "*If Thou art the Son of God.*"

The temptation to *distrust* God's grace as well as His providence comes to every man. A "Son of God" indeed, when everything seems to be going wrong with me! What evidence does my life afford of being a partaker of "the Divine nature"? (2 Pet. 1 : 4). Here is the answer: "It is written (v. 4) in "His precious and exceeding great promises" (2 Pet. 1 : 4), upon which I fall back and rest.

(5) "*Then the devil taketh Him into the city.*"

If there are temptations peculiar to solitude, there are others, no less formidable, to be met in the midst of the multitude. In the crowd comes the temptation to *presumption*, even as the temptation to doubt comes when alone. I need not be ignorant of the devil's devices and hence may be proof against them, alike in the city and the country, since "forewarned is forearmed." But oh! how many a man meets his undoing when taken into the city.

(8) "*Again . . . unto an exceeding high mountain.*"

As the deepest valleys lie hard by the highest peaks, so it is from the points of greatest elevation in life that the descent into the deepest depths of degradation not uncom-

monly commences. At such crises, of all others, I need to watch and pray and say without delay, "Get thee hence, Satan," no matter though the temptation appear "as an angel of light."

(11) "*Then the devil leaveth Him and behold angels came and ministered unto Him.*"

A firm attitude of uncompromising resistance, refusing instantly every suggestion of Satan, is a sure way to win the victory. "Resist the devil and he will flee" (Jas. 4 : 7).

He who takes "the form of a servant" (Phil. 2 : 6) is served by angels. But, while the temptation is described so fully, not a detail is given of this ministry of the angels. God would prepare me for being tempted of the devil, but He does not encourage me to be expecting angelic entertainment.

Prayer:

"O Saviour Christ, Thou, too, art man;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide;

"Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

Amen.

FIFTH DAY

MATTHEW 4 : 12–25.

Title :

"*The Wilderness*" (v. 1).

Thought ;

Jesus leaves Galilee (12–16), begins His public ministry (17), calls the first four disciples (18–24) and enters upon His threefold program of teaching, preaching and healing (23–25).

Truth :

(17) "*From that time began Jesus to preach.*"

There are fresh points of departure in every growing life. What was the last such mile-post in my progress? Have I begun really to "preach"? Have I begun too soon? Jesus began *after* being tested and anointed (Luke 4 : 16).

(19) "*I will make you fishers of men.*"

The Master knows how to make the most of whatever training a man may have to start with; He utilizes to the full any skill or fitness He finds. Only the fisherman can teach others how to fish. To catch men: (1) I must go where men are; (2) use that which attracts them; (3) be patient; (4) avoid coming between them and the Sun, lest the shadows I cast drive them away from Him.

(23) "*Teaching . . . preaching . . . healing.*"

Ours is an all-round gospel. It is Divine Life applied to human need on all sides. He sends His disciples forth "teaching" the mind, "preaching" to the heart and "healing" the body. This is the missionary program to-day. The whole range of life is to be redeemed. Not an item is to be omitted. The several tangents on which men have swung away from the centre are due to neglect in the first instance of a certain side of the gospel and then an over-emphasis of the same, in an attempt to make up the deficiency. It is when one side of truth is neglected or another over-stated so as to make up for deficiency, that men get off on to tangents and lose the balance of truth. Am I holding the gospel in its entirety?

Prayer:

O Thou who wast anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power and wentest about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, anoint all of Thy disciples, likewise, that they may truly follow Thee. So fill us that we may be enabled to meet all the needs of all with whom we come into contact, whether that need be physical, mental or spiritual, that Thy saving health may be known among all people.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

SIXTH DAY

MATTHEW 5 : 1–16.

Title :

"*Blessed*" (vs. 5–11).

Thought :

Jesus gives forth the Great Proclamation of the Kingdom, embracing a sketch of the New Man (1–16) under the New Law (17–48).

Truth :

(1) "*And seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain.*"

"And when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him" (8 : 1). There are times when, in order to help the multitude, the man of God must get away from the multitudes. Only as I get away from the crowd and alone with God, will I be prepared to unfold the Word of Life. As one has said, "I must be Moses pleading on the Mount, if I would be Joshua, victorious in the daily strife."

(3) "*Blessed.*"

Happiness may depend upon what happens, but blessedness strikes its roots deeper down into the river-bed of Eternal Righteousness. The one has to do with human circumstances, while the other deals with divine character. Let me never be content to be merely happy, when mine is the greater privilege of being "blessed."

(13) "*Ye are the salt of the earth . . . the light.*"

The man who has himself been blessed, is to become a blessing to others. "I will bless thee, and be thou a blessing" (Gen. 12 : 1), was the promise-command to Abraham when he was sent forth. And such blessing should become manifest in two ways—within and without: subjectively, it acts as "salt," giving tone to the whole inner life; objectively, it should be as a burning and shining light, —"a lamp" (1) in the "house" (locally), (2) in the "city" (nationally), (3) in the world (universally). "The light that shines the farthest, shines brightest nearest home."

Prayer:

O Thou who art Thyself "the light of the world" and hast honoured Thy people by appointing them, likewise, to be "the light of the world," help us to keep our lamps trimmed and burning and to have oil always in our vessels with the lamps.

"O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee:
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be."

Amen.

SEVENTH DAY

MATTHEW 5 : 17–48.

Title :

"*Blessed*" (vs. 5–11)

Thought :

As the first section of this chapter presents the New Man, so from the seventeenth verse on, is set forth the New Law.

Truth :

(20) "*Your Righteousness.*"

The way that Jesus proceeds to make the Kingdom of Righteousness, is by making a really righteous man and multiplying him, after his kind: thus He makes the kingdom. As "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Psalm. 11 : 7), so the righteous man will fulfill the "royal law" (James. 2 : 8); that law must regulate his whole life, from centre to circumference:

(1) His *will*—no un-kind feeling (vs. 21–26)
(2) His *mind*—no un-chaste thought (27–32)
(3) His *speech*—no un-true word (33–37)
(4) His *conduct*—no un-generous act (38–42)

but always and only *Love* (43–48). How marvellously the Son of Man understands men. He begins at the core, and dealing first, with the very root of the matter, in the will, moves outward to the uttermost circumference of the life, renewing every part.

(23) "*Against Thee.*"

I can make no offering that God will accept, so long as I have done any wrong to another which has not been confessed and set right. Later on, there is the still deeper lesson for me to learn, that so long as I do not forgive another who has done me a wrong, I cannot pray effectually (Matt. 8: 15). Have I fully learned the first of these lessons?

Prayer:

O Thou who art Thyself our Righteousness, make us right through and through. May the meditations of our hearts and the words of our lips and every act of our lives be acceptable in Thy sight, Jesus our Righteousness.

Amen.

EIGHTH DAY

MATTHEW 6 : 1–15.

Title :

"*Secret*" (v. 4).

Thought :

This is but a fragment of the description, in chapters 6 and 7, of the New Life of the New Man who lives under the New Law. To-day's portion includes the two great duties of Giving (2–4) and Praying (5–15). In the latter paragraph He first tells *how* to pray, then for *what*, giving to His disciples the model prayer.

Truth :

(1) "*Your Righteousness.*"

Righteousness once realized to any extent must be expressed. Then comes the temptation to unreality—to give an expression beyond the actual possession—in short, hypocrisy. And there is nothing that the Righteous Lord who "loveth righteousness" (Psalm 11 : 7) so hates as He hates hypocrisy. Is there any in me?

(4) "*In secret.*"

The common term in the equation of the Giving and Praying life is, that both are to be quite free from all self-assertion. This New Life is *hid* with Christ in God (Col. 3 : 3). As the sources of the river are to be traced up to the solitude of the mountain-tops, so the springs of every life that flows like a river (Is. 48 : 18) are far out of sight. So important does our Lord deem this to be,

that in outlining the program of the New Life which He came to enable us to live, this is the *one* point upon which He insists: it must be "in secret." Whatever else should characterize my Giving and Praying and Fasting, each must be kept well out of sight, for these are flowers that will not bloom in the open; if exposed to the glare of publicity, they are sure to wither away.

(6) "*Enter into thine inner chamber.*"

This is "the counting room" in "the King's business." Just in proportion as a man is continually taking in here, will he be giving. Yet in outlining the New Life, the Lord puts Giving before Praying. For if a man go on robbing God, how is there to be any effectual praying in that man's life? Let him first widen the outlet by Giving, and then only can the inlet be deepened for Praying. God's giving is conditioned on my living; and generous godlike giving is one of the best possible proofs of genuine godly living.

Prayer:

Lord, make me real; save me from hypocrisy. Teach me to give more generously. Lead me into a wider ministry in serving others and a deeper life of communion with Thyself.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

NINTH DAY

MATTHEW 6 : 16–7 : 12.

Title :

"*Secret*" (v. 4).

Thought :

The subject of Prayer is unfolded from 6 : 5 to 7 : 12, each of the intervening paragraphs being directly related to this main theme. Fasting (6 : 16–18) may be used as a help to prayer (in a broader sense than that of mere abstinence from food), and the hindrances of worrying about things (6 : 19–34), and of judging other people (7 : 1–5) must, likewise, be put away ; then, when guarded against wasting the "pearls" obtained in answer to prayer (7 : 6), the New Man is ready to pass on to the higher degree of Intercessory Prayer (7 : 7–12).

Truth :

(25) "*Be not anxious.*"

The life that thus has its springs in the unseen and eternal, will not be easily moved by shifting circumstances. For, instead of looking at God in the light of circumstances, it will regard every circumstance in the light of God, looking upon everything through the light of His Word. Hence there need be no anxiety about food and raiment or anything else. "Having food and covering we shall therewith be content" (1 Tim. 6 : 8). In fact, under these two heads pretty much every item of expense may be included. The house in which I live is only the

outer covering for my body. Education is one of the kinds of food which my nature demands. Now the good God would never make a creature without providing for all his real needs; hence, I need never have any anxiety, any more than a bird is bothered about its food, or a lily as to its dress, *provided* I am busy about my Father's affairs. For while I care enough about Him to be about His business, He will surely relieve me of all care about myself. He who neglects neither Giving nor Praying will never have need for worrying and will never yield to the sin of judging others.

Prayer:

Lord, may the springs of my life be so hidden in the secret place of the Most High that the issues thereof may be unhindered by any anxieties. Enable me to do my part in so deepening the channels of my life that the streams may indeed widen into flowing rivers of peace. Fulfill in me the promise that "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91 : 1).

For Thine own Honour, *Amen.*

TENTH DAY

MATTHEW 7 : 13–29.

Title :

"*The Narrow Gate*" (v. 13).

Thought :

The Narrow Gate (13–14), with its twin pillars of Giving and Praying, is the entrance into the New Man's "house" where the false are not admitted (15–23) and the building is founded on "the Rock" (24–27). Such teaching made the people marvel (28–29).

Truth :

(14) "*Few find it.*"

For only after using the silver key (Giving) at the porter's lodge, does one find the Golden Key (in Praying) at the Palace gate. And most men are so busy coining their metal into dollars, that there is not enough to spare to make the key which would let them into unlimited resources. Oh ! the pity of it, the throng of beggars outside hugging their bags of silver, while the few, melting their silver into a key, enter into the storeroom where is gold untold ! Am I among the few or with the great majority, who by their own rejection are limiting the Divine election ?

(21) "*The Will of My Father.*"

This is the password of the King's Palace. "Not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6 : 38) was the word upon the lips of the King.

"He that doeth the will of God abideth (here) forever" (1 John 2 : 17) is the assurance of every child of the King. Have I the password? Then I may go in and out and abide ever in the son's place of privilege.

(25, 26) "*Rock . . . sand.*"

There is all the difference between absolute reliability and utter instability, between the man who rests on "the Rock of Ages" and he who depends upon the shifting sand of his own self-will. The one is "fixed" (Psalm 57 : 7) while the other "straightway forgetteth" (James 1 : 24) and is "unstable in all his ways" (James 1 : 8).

Prayer:

Oh, Thou who art Thyself the Way, help me to enter in at the Narrow Gate. Teach me to give. Teach me to pray. Give me a place, here and now, in the house where the false cannot enter. There may I abide "understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5 : 17) doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6 : 6). Thus shall I be Thy "brother" indeed (Mark 3 : 35). Lord, "I delight to do Thy will" (Psalm 40 : 8). "Oh, teach me to do Thy will" (Psalm 143 : 10).

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

ELEVENTH DAY

MATTHEW 8.

Title:

"*I Will*" (vs. 3, 7, 19).

Thought:

Jesus heals the leper with a touch (1–4), speaks the word of power to the palsied (5–13), expels the fever (14–17), calls the undecided to follow Him (18–22), stills the tempest with a word (23–27) and commands the demons to come out (28–34).

Truth:

(3) "*He touched him.*"

To really reach men, I must get into close touch with them. No matter how leprous a man may be, he may be healed by the touch of Divine power and purity. Close contact is essential for any real spiritual helpfulness. Am I coming into saving touch with men who need to be brought into contact with the power of Christ?

(11) "*They shall come from the East and the West.*"

In the coming kingdom the great wall of separation between the East and West will be completely broken down; there shall be no more a foreign country or a foreigner; every man shall be neighbour to every other—American and Chinaman, Russian and Japanese. I need to study geography until there is no such thing as a foreign country and to study men until no man shall longer seem to me as "a foreigner."

(17) "*Himself took our infirmities.*"

He came that I might have life and have abundance

(John 10: 10). Hence whatever hinders the fullest life, physical as well as intellectual and spiritual, is to be removed. For holiness means wholeness. A full salvation affects body, mind and spirit (1 Thess. 5: 23). Peace of heart promotes health of body.

(24) "*He was asleep.*"

Indefatigable worker that He was, our Lord knew well how to rest. While all was confusion about Him and others were worried and worn, He slept the dreamless sleep of a little child, gathering up a reserve of strength to meet the stress of the storm a little later on, and to speak the word of power which brought "the great calm." This is a lesson that I need to learn more and more from Him who alone can garrison heart and mind with His peace.

(24, 26) "*A great storm . . . a great calm.*"

And between the "storm" and the "calm," accounting for all the difference, a fervent, effectual prayer and the answering Word of the Lord. Why am I so slow to learn this open secret of peace?

"Peace, peace, wonderful peace,
Sent down from the Saviour above,
Sweep over my Spirit; I pray thee this day,
In fathomless billows of love."

Prayer:

Lord, help me to come into such helpful contact with men, that because of my life and work, men may come into closer contact with one another, until at last the race shall realize indeed the true Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. Teach me, too, to use my strength as not abusing it, and to conserve my energy to-day, so as to be ready to meet the demands of to-morrow.

For Jesus' sake, *Amen.*

TWELFTH DAY

MATTHEW 9.

Title :

"*Mercy*" (v. 13).

Thought :

He forgives sin (1–8), attaches a publican to Him (9), dines with publicans and sinners (10–13), explains the absence of fasting among His followers (14–17), raises the ruler's dead daughter (18–26) restores the woman having an issue (20–22), gives sight to the blind (27–31), casts out the dumb devil (32–34), then goes forth evangelizing in the villages (35–38).

Truth :

(2) "*Thy sins are forgiven.*"

Truly, no man ever spoke as this man; in all human history was there ever any other who spake such a word as this? Well might He feel that He must attach a seal of supernatural power to attest such an instrument. He goes now to the very root of the matter and deals with the cause of weakness in sin that enfeebles will and paralyzes thought and saps physical stamina. No wonder that the multitudes were "afraid" of such power as this. Have I heard this word and felt this power?

(5) "*Which is easier?*"

Every difficulty is equally easy. To omnipotence the hardest things are done without effort. It is a sure sign of weakness to pick out the "easier" task. "Is not the

evidence of ease written upon all the great works of God? they seem to say, not that there has been great effort here, but there is great power here. And that is what we are so slow to learn; as though we could do anything by iron bars and perspiration, except to lose some pounds of our own weight." Am I working with omnipotent strength? (Col. 1 : 11).

(9) "*He saw a man.*"

Jesus used His eyes. Even as He passed, "He saw." And above all else, "He saw a man." In this man, who would have appeared so much like the rest of the mass, He saw *a sinner to be saved and an apostle to be sent* forth to save others. Why is it that, while the sculptor can see the angel in the marble, I fail to see in every man I meet, a sinner ruined without Christ, but redeemed by Him at countless cost?

(30) "*See that no man know it.*"

Publicity often hinders usefulness. There are many things that should have no place in a report. True power does not advertise itself. It is the very acme of real greatness to conceal itself. Do I love to be unknown, studiously avoiding all display of what I do?

Prayer:

Lord, who alone canst forgive sin, speak the word of power that shall remove all cause of palsy from my life. "Forgive us our trespasses . . . and deliver us from the Evil One, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. *Amen.*"

THIRTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 10.

Title:

"*Authority.*" (v. 1).

Thought:

He commissions the Twelve (1–4) to go first to the Jews (5–6), ministering in practical helpfulness (7–10), receiving hospitality with discrimination (11–15), fearing no man, but prepared for persecution (16–23), expecting no better treatment than their Master (24–33), manfully bearing the cross (34–38), identifying themselves in all things with Christ (40–42).

Truth:

(8) "*Heal . . . raise the dead . . . cast out demons. . . . Give.*"

I am to be ever giving out to others, and hence I must be ever drawing from Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. His grace is inexhaustible and, though ever giving out, I can never run dry if I only continually keep drawing upon the Source in Him.

(28) "*Fear Him . . . fear not, therefore.*"

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1 : 7) and it is, likewise, the end of fear of anything else. For "perfect love casteth out fear" and "God is love" (1 John 4 : 8).

(34) "*A sword.*"

If true of His family, may it not be so in many another? The "Sword" pierced Mary's heart and did cleave her family in twain; yet afterwards it became a mighty magnet to reunite them.

(42) "*A cup of cold water only.*"

It is the doing of little deeds in a great way, that counts with God. Am I showing great thoughtfulness and kindliness and grace in doing little things habitually?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to be depending all the while upon Thee for authority and power and courage and patience and all that I need. Teach me to fear Thee alone and to hate only sin. Enable me this day to see and to seize every opportunity for doing little deeds of kindness with great grace.

For Thy name's sake, *Amen.*

FOURTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 11.

Title:

"*Rest*" (v. 28).

Thought:

John the Baptist, sending to assure himself as to the Messiahship of Jesus, receives not only evidence on that point (1–6), but testimony to himself as well (7–19); a condemnation of the cities that rejected the evidence of Jesus' "signs" follows (10–24) and the invitation to Rest (25–29).

Truth:

(25) "*Jesus answered and said . . . O Father.*"

Seeing His own generation refusing to listen to either the message of John the Baptist or His own, His heart is heavy-laden and He turns to His unfailing source of comfort in the "Lord of heaven and earth." To Jesus, prayer was no monologue, but a dialogue. He heard the Father's voice within and He "answered"; prayer was the response of Jesus to the Father's voice, ever speaking within the soul, unheard by "the wise and understanding," but unmistakable to the "meek and lowly in heart." And the latter our Lord invites to Him for this heart's-ease.

(28) "*Come . . . learn . . . rest.*"

Since "this is Eternal Life, to know the only true

God" (John 17 : 3), the way to Life is to "learn" from the only One who knows. John the Baptist sent to Him and learned of a "yoke" that would make it easy to bear the heaviest burden. And since He invites me to "Come" to Him and learn, I will accept His invitation, matriculate in His school and learn Life's lessons at His feet. Then only can I be of real service, for as Carlyle says, "the most modest little pond can reflect the sun, *if it is absolutely at rest* in itself."

(29) "*Meek and lowly.*"

This is the very opposite of "wise and understanding" (25). I must realize that I do not "know it all"; indeed I am but a little child, not knowing anything as I ought. But I have a "wonderful Counsellor" (Isa. 9 : 6) for my teacher and hence there is hope for even such a stupid scholar.

(30) "*My yoke is easy.*"

Who would have thought of seeking "rest" in a "yoke"? Yet that is Jesus' way. For (1) the yoke is for two, and I can no longer bear my burden alone, if yoke-fellow with Him who says, "Me and thee" (17 : 27); (2) This yoke is "easy"; the Carpenter who Himself made yokes, knows all about them and fits the yoke to the neck perfectly; (3) He takes the heavy end and hence the burden now is "light"; (4) without a yoke, the ox would be of no earthly use; in fact, it is "the yoke" that makes the burden "light."

Prayer:

Lord, save me from the doubt that comes through losing sight of the evidence of Thy "works," as Thou art doing them continually to-day. I thank Thee for a place in Thy Kingdom; help me to fill it. Fit the yoke to my

neck. Keep me from chafing. Make me meet to be a worker together (2 Cor. 6 : 1) with Thee.

"O lightest burden, sweetest yoke!
It lifts, it bears my happy soul,
It giveth wings to this poor heart;
My freedom is Thy grand control.

"Upon God's will I lay me down,
As child upon its mother's breast;
No silken couch, nor softest bed,
Could ever give me such deep rest.

"Thy wonderful grand will, my God,
With triumph now I make it mine,
And faith shall cry a joyous Yes
To every dear command of Thine."

Amen and Amen.

FIFTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 12:1–21.

Title:

"*Beelzebub*" (v. 24).

Thought:

Accused of Sabbath breaking (1–8), He proceeds to heal the withered hand (9–13), and the Pharisees concoct a charge against "My servant" (14–21).

Truth:

(6) "*One greater than the temple is here.*"

As the potter is greater than the vessel he turns out, the watchmaker greater than the watch, the Creator than the creature, so Jesus is "greater than the Temple" (6), "greater than the Sabbath" (8) which He has instituted. Will He, then, deny Himself? Will He alter or violate His own Laws? Surely not; nor will He permit the letter of the law to kill the spirit of it. The Sabbath was never meant to be the bane, but the boon of men, not a burden, but a benefit. The provision intended to prevent pleasing one's self is not to be applied to perpetuate pain. Suffering should be relieved where self-seeking is utterly prohibited.

(18) "*Behold My servant.*"

Every true servant of Christ shall be like Christ: *a picked man*—"chosen" (18); *of lovable disposition*—"beloved" (18); *Spirit-filled*—"my Spirit upon Him" (18); *fearlessly outspoken*—"declare judgment" (18); *not*

contentious or self-assertive—" shall not strive nor cry " (19); *but unobtrusive*—" neither shall any one hear His voice " (19); *very gentle and considerate*—" a bruised reed shall he not break " (20); yet, *victorious*—" judgment unto victory " (20); *an inspiring leader*—" in His name shall the Gentiles hope " (21).

Prayer:

Lord, I am Thy servant. O make me a man after Thine own heart, answering to the description given by Thee through Isaiah; make me grow up in all things into Thee my Head.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

SIXTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 12: 22–50.

Title:

"*Beelzebub*" (v. 24).

Thought:

Jesus having healed a demoniac (22) is charged with being in league with the devil and refutes the charge (23–37), but refuses a "sign" (38–45); He points out who His real relatives are (46–50).

Truth:

(29) "*First bind the strong man.*"

This has been done: "For Jehovah hath ransomed Jacob, and redeemed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jer. 31: 11). The picture presented in Isaiah 63 perfectly represents my present position in relation to the Adversary: *He who is "Mighty to save," is between me and the foe.* He has fought the battle to a finish, He has trodden the winepress alone, His raiment was stained with blood in the struggle, His eye pitied and His arm brought salvation, so He has become my Saviour; He redeemed me from the power of the enemy. Hence the year of His redeemed *is come*, and I no longer fear "the strong man," my Adversary.

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask, Who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He!

Lord Sabaoth is His name,
From age to age the same;
And He must win the battle.

"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us."

(50) "*Whosoever shall do the will.*"

Closer than ties of blood or friendship is the bond of *the will of God* which binds together the disciples of Jesus. No matter what difference of nationality, or language or colour, all in Christ Jesus are "one." I am brother to every true Christian, whether Hottentot or Hawaiian, Chilian or Chinese. Only as I take every child of His to be my brother, can I have God for my Father. And every one who does His will is His true child. This is the one test of belonging to the "one family" (Eph. 3 : 15), *doing Father's will.* To do His will, I must know it. And to know His will, I must study His Word. And "if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7 : 17).

Prayer:

Oh, Saviour, who, for us sinners and our redemption, hast poured out Thine own soul unto death and, having won the victory once for all, hast gone up on high to receive gifts for men, even for the rebellious, grant that I may not fail of obtaining the fruits of Thy redemption. Forbid that I should be still striving to accomplish that which Thou hast "finished." Grant me grace to truly reckon myself "dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6 : 11).

Amen.

SEVENTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 13: 1–23.

Title:

"*Mysteries*" (v. 11).

Thought:

Jesus describes the Kingdom of heaven in a series of parables, the first of which is the Sower (1–23).

Truth:

(11) "*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom.*"

What responsibility attaches to the privilege of knowing! "This is life eternal, to *know* Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ" (John 17: 3). "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to *know* His will, and to *see* the Righteous One, and to *hear* a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness" (Acts 22: 14, 15). This was one of the messages that revolutionized Paul's life. But only unto those who are ready to respond, is it given "to know." To all others, the transforming truths of the Kingdom of heaven remain "mysteries" forever. Only those who are willing to become prophets are allowed to be seers. Would I not be permitted "to know" more, if willing to witness more?

"Light obeyed increaseth light,
Light rejected bringeth night;
Who will give thee power to choose,
If the love of Truth thou lose?"

(12) "*Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.*"

He who has ears has the key to music and all the world which ears alone can unlock. He who has eyes has also visions of beauty, open to him but fast closed to the blind man. And only he who has purity can have visions of God, either in His Word or His works. He who has Christ for his teacher, has the key to "all mysteries." And what are mysteries to him who has only sight, become revelations to him who has *vision.*

(23) "*Heareth the Word and understandeth it.*"

God only can give me understanding, but I alone can use it. "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding" (1 John 5 : 20). "Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24 : 45). Am I making the most of this God-given faculty, or am I laying myself open to the rebuke, "Are ye, also without understanding?" (Matt. 15 : 16).

Prayer :

"Lord, open Thou mine eyes." Initiate me into the mysteries of Thy Kingdom. Make me a seer, in order that I may become more truly a prophet. Let me not lose the eyes of my understanding by failing to use them. Anoint mine eyes with eye-salve, that I may see.

For Thine own Name's sake, *Amen.*

EIGHTEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 13: 24–58.

Title:

"*Mysteries*" (v. 11).

Thought:

Jesus likens the Kingdom to the seed (24–30), mustard seed (vs. 31, 32), leaven (33), explains the tares (34–43), treasure (44), the merchant (45, 46), the net (47–53), and the people marvel at His teaching (54–58).

Truth:

(29) "*Nay; lest . . . ye root up the wheat.*"

Motives are too subtle for man to deal with. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7). If I attempt to judge, I may make terrible mistakes. Some whom I consider all right, may be quite wrong, while others of whom I disapprove may be most pleasing in God's sight. In trying to get rid of Judas Iscariot, I may shut out Judas *not* Iscariot. Let me not assume God's function. He is Judge. And to his own master every man standeth or falleth.

(36) "*Explain unto us the parable.*"

Blessed is he, whoever he be, that can have Jesus to make the obscure things plain. As "the precious things of the everlasting hills" (Deut. 33: 15) are not lying around on the surface, so, likewise, "the precious things of heaven" must be searched for as for hid treasure.

And these can be unlocked only by Him who holds the key to all things—in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Col. 2: 3). And He can unravel every riddle.

(38) "*The field is the world.*"

Oh, the breadth "of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3: 19). "As far as the East is from the West" (Psalm 103: 12)—if any man can grasp such a vast measuring-rod—"so" broad is the field that awaits the sowing of the good seed of the Kingdom.

> "For the love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind."

As John Wesley said, "the world is my parish." It takes "the world" to make a Wesley. It is impossible to make a large life in a little mould. How large is "the world" in which I live and move, about which I know and for which I care? Given that, and the rest of the equation can soon be settled. If I am content to shut myself up, in my sympathies, to a narrow little world, I never can hope to be more than a narrow little man.

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll
> Leave thy low-vaulted past,
> Let each new temple nobler than the last
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free,
> Leaving thine out-grown shell by life's unresting sea."

Prayer:

O Lord, explain to me the parable. Take me in, away from the multitude, out of the crowd, aside from the noise of the world without. Take me in where it is still enough to hear the "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19: 12). Then

out of that "secret place" (Psalm 91 : 1), teach me to look out through the windows of Thine own big heart of love and see "the world." O Son of God, who art too great to make any such artificial distinction as "Foreign Missions," and "Home Missions," teach me, like Thee, to "so love the world" as to *give* myself, all that I am and have, for its redemption. Widen the sympathies of my soul. Make me broader. It is close and narrow where I have been living. Lord, enlarge me to love the whole world.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

NINETEENTH DAY

MATTHEW 14: 1–12.

Title:

"*Five thousand*" (v. 21).

Thought:

John is beheaded (1–12).

Truth:

(2) "*This is John . . . risen.*"

Superstition will move some men whom the Truth of God does not touch, for the reason that tares will grow where wheat can take no root. Herod's guilty conscience made him a coward. Before this panic fear, his religion went by the board, forthwith. For, although he was a Sadducee, he thought John had risen from the dead. So much for theories of religion divorced from a religious life! May my religion be more really a part of me!

(4) "*John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have her.*"

Which of these twain is really king, the man in regal robes but of craven heart or the other, clothed in camel's hair and a leathern girdle (Mark 1 : 6) but with a royal soul? Is it the one who "feared the multitude" (5), or he to whom the multitudes flocked (Matt. 3 : 5), and who feared the face of none but God? Under the rough robe of the Baptist beat the heart of truest nobility. Like him, if like unto his Master and mine, I too will fearlessly speak

the Truth, without respect of persons, alike to high and low.

(12) "*They went and told Jesus.*"

They "gathered themselves together unto Jesus and told Him all things, whatsoever they had done and whatsoever they had taught" (Mark 6 : 30). Jesus is the mightiest of magnets, the centre of attraction for all His followers. He is the touch-stone whereby to test all my deeds and words. Who can possibly go far wrong who follows this rule, of telling Jesus "all things"?

Prayer:

Lord, be Thou my confidant, my bosom friend. Help me to open my heart to Thee, to tell Thee "all things"—all that I have been doing, all that I have been saying, all that I have been thinking and desiring. Then teach me to whom to speak and what to say and give me the courage to speak fearlessly and give me, also, the grace to speak the Truth in love.

For the honour of Thy Great Name, *Amen.*

TWENTIETH DAY

MATTHEW 14: 13–36.

Title:

"*Five thousand*" (v. 21).

Thought:

Jesus withdraws to the desert where He feeds the multitude (13–21), and after a season of solitary prayer, walks on the water to the tempest-tossed disciples (22–33) and on reaching Gennesaret heals many (34–36).

Truth:

(14) "*He came . . . saw . . . had compassion . . . healed their sick.*"

To go where the people are, to get to know their need, to have a fellow feeling for them and then to give practical effect to this good-will, this is Christ's way and the only right way for me. This is "missions" simplified—real, applied Christianity, brought down out of the clouds to move among men. And such religion cannot but move men.

(16) "*Give ye them to eat.*"

Here is "the pattern shown us in the mount"—the Master's own method of feeding the multitude, of evangelizing the world. Here is the philosophy of missions summed up in concrete form:

The picture, presented in three touches of the great Spirit Artist's brush: (1) "A desert place," (2) "a

great multitude," "as sheep not having a shepherd," (3) "the day far spent."

The problem, "Whence are *we* to buy bread that these may eat?"

Three typical solutions are suggested:

(1) Judas No-faith says, "Send them away."

(2) Philip Little-faith, "two hundred penny worth is not enough."

(3) Andrew Faith-and-Works, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes."

The Master's Method:

(1) *Prayer* (inspiration)—"He went up into a mountain."

(2) *Study* (education)—"He lifted up His eyes and looked (not a glance but a long, lingering look) and His heart was touched with a feeling of compassion."

(3) *Action* (practical application)—(*a*) Distribution of responsibility, "He made them sit down in ranks" (Mark 6: 39) . . . "by hundreds and fifties" (distributing responsibility to each of the twelve members of the church).

(*b*) Consecration of self and substance—"Give ye them to eat." "Bring them hither to Me."

(*c*) Consequent blessing—"Gather up the fragments"—"twelve baskets full." (*d*) Consummation of the enterprise, "All filled." (*e*) Coronation of the Christ—"Make Him King."

(23) "*He went up into a mountain apart to pray.*"

Herein lay the secret of His power, and here must I find mine. It is only as I am in touch with God, that my life can be instinct with power for service. Why do I not get "apart" more? The hour of greatest popularity is the hour of greatest peril. Success necessitates supplication.

When the crowd cries "Long live the King," I should cry to the King to save me. Have I such a "mountain" retreat?

> "Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
> Or others, that we are not always strong,
> That we are ever overborn with care,
> That we should ever weak or heartless be,
> Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
> And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

Prayer:

Lord, help me to study, to pray, to obey, to act as though I really believed that Thou dost mean what Thou dost say. Help me to follow the pattern shown upon the mount, and to set about doing it—*now*. Grant me to look upon the multitudes through Thine eyes, to feel something of Thine own compassion for the perishing, to touch men with something of Thine own divine power, to heal and help them back to God.

For Thine own honour and glory, *Amen.*

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

MATTHEW 15.

Title;

"*The Crumbs*" (v. 27).

Thought:

Taken to task by the Pharisees and Scribes for neglect of tradition, Jesus denounces their hypocrisy and teaches the people what defilement really is (1–20); then, withdrawing to the parts of Tyre and Sidon, He heals the Canaanitish woman's daughter (21–28), and, returning to Galilee, heals the multitude and feeds the four thousand.

Truth:

(13) "*Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*"

"The branch of His planting" (Is. 60 : 21), "trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah" (Is. 61 : 3), cannot but flourish. If only my work is rooted in the will of God,—if it is that which Christ can claim as a "branch in Me" (John 15 : 2)—then there can be no question at all as to its permanency or its fruitfulness. "God's husbandry" (1 Cor. 3 : 9) is sure to grow and increase. And everything else must go. Only "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2 : 17).

(19) "*Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts.*"

The heart is the source of all sin. For you sow a

thought and you reap an act; you sow an act and you reap a habit: you sow a habit and you reap a character; you sow a character and you reap a destiny. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23 : 7).

(23) "*He answered her not a word*" . . . (cf. v. 26)—"*He answered.*"

The difference between the blank silence of refusal and the *carte blanche* of an unreserved answer to the self-same prayer, is accounted for entirely by the difference of attitude on the part of the asker. Jesus insists upon sincerity. The Gentile who comes to lay claim on Him as "Son of David," meets no response, but coming to Him as "Lord," has every need supplied. And how can I expect Him to disclose the resources of the Son of God, if I regard Him only as the Son of Man?

(28) "*O woman, great is thy faith.*"

The faith that is founded on His word of promise receives a *carte blanche* on which to draw, up to any limit. Delay but serves to strengthen such faith. And it grows not only in the sheltered garden of Israel, or in a Christian community, but even in the heath of a "heathen" heart. For it is a "plant which my heavenly Father hath planted" (v. 13) and hence it cannot be uprooted.

(32) "*I would not send them away fasting.*"

The compassion of Christ is ever practical. It has to do with "loaves and fishes" for the empty stomach, quite as much as with rest for the heavy-laden heart. He is no mystic dreamer, but a matter of fact man of affairs. He can serve in the commissariat, quite as well as in the Privy Council. So, God helping me, I would be observant, sympathetic, resourceful, practical, effective, not only seeing what needs to be done, but likewise bringing it to pass.

Prayer:

O Thou, who art the Author and Finisher of faith, help Thou mine unbelief. Make faith to flourish as a seed planted and tended by Thine own hand. Speak Thou the word of power which shall turn the blossom into luscious fruit. Weed out every evil thought and desire. Regarding not any iniquity in my heart, may I be enabled to call upon Thee, so that Thou wilt hear and answer me, yea, more, so that it may be possible for Thee to commend my faith. For then only can I truly serve men and glorify God.

For Christ's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

MATTHEW 16.

Title:

"*The Keys*" (v. 19).

Thought:

After refusing the Pharisees and Sadducees a sign (1–4), Jesus warns the disciples against "the leaven" (5–12), receives the Great Confession from Peter (13–20), and, for the first time, forecasts the Cross (21–28).

Truth:

(3) "*The signs of the times.*"

"We are in the midst of a great subsidence and much farther on than most men at all realize. There has been a great letting down of faith in the fundamentals of Christianity," said one of the greatest thinkers of the day, in conversation with the writer, recently. Is this not what was foretold by the Spirit through Paul (2 Tim. 3 : 1), that "in the last days grievous times shall come"? My business is to be like the men of Issachar, who had the advantage of their brethren in that they "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. 12 : 32).

(18) "*Upon this Rock will I build My Church.*"

Even though, like Peter, I be as shifting sand, yet if I am wholly in God's hand, surely He will make me to stand like a Rock. The man who is unstable as water

(Gen. 49 : 4) shall become a stalwart, when strengthened by Jehovah. He who cowers before a maid-servant's taunt and denies the Lord who bought him, becomes a "pillar in the temple of God" (Rev. 3 : 12). The marvel is that the Lord should build on so frail a foundation as the confessions of creatures of clay. And yet that is like Him who "placed the sand for a bound of the sea by a perpetual decree" (Jer. 5 : 22). He can take the shifting sand of a stumbling Simon and convert his fickleness into the stability of the martyr Peter. And if He did that for Peter, He will do no less for me, if I but let Him do so. Though ever so weak, I may be made mighty by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (Gen. 49 : 24) and of Peter. For

> In His pierced hand,
> E'en a rope of sand,
> Holds the restless waves
> That lash the shores
> Of every land.

(21) "*From that time began Jesus to show that He must suffer.*"

In every life there should come times when the clearer view is obtained, of the end and outcome. The outlines of the cross become clearer than before. Signs are seen of the process of purification that is going on apace. How practically is that to appear in my own case? Is it not by greater meekness and gentleness, even tenderness and compassion and consideration for others, such as Jesus showed, that I can best give proof that I have truly taken up my cross to follow Him up to Calvary and beyond? I need a new point of departure. My friends require better proof that I am partaker with Him in His sufferings. Shall it not be from this time that this shall begin anew?

Prayer:

Lord, whatever of instability there may be about me, may there be none within me. Though I am as dust, Thou canst stablish me, so that I shall stand like a rock. Make me such a man as Thou canst depend upon. Teach me to share in Thy sufferings, taking up my cross daily and following Thee.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

MATTHEW 17: 1–13.

Title:

"*Transfigured*" (v. 2).

Thought:

Transfigured (1–8), Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the second Elijah (9–13), reverses the disciples' defeat in healing the epileptic boy (14–18), explains the cause of their failure (19–21), predicts, for the third time, His death and resurrection (22–23), and provides for payment of the tax (24–27).

Truth:

(1–3) "*Peter . . . James . . . John . . . Moses . . . Elijah . . . Jesus.*"

Did ever such another company meet on earth? "The Law" is represented both by Moses, the exponent of the Old School, and by James, the exponent of the New. "The Prophets" are represented not only by Elijah, the prophet of Mt. Carmel, but also by John, the Seer of Patmos. And, Peter is there, voicing "the psalms" of common life, both the low notes and the high, while above and beyond them all is Jesus, the Beloved Son of the Father.

"O blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia!"

(16) "*They could not cure him.*"

How often the power of Christ is frustrated by the powerlessness of the Christian. Power is possible only where the circuit is unbroken. Where the connection with Omnipotence is complete "nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17 : 20). In this case, failure was due to separation from the Head and lack of unity among the members. Every failure of mine is, in fact, a denial of my Lord. Why did I fail? Because of my "little faith" —which is the Master's kindly considerate way of describing my "*unbelief.*" But why have I so little *love?* For, if I loved the Lord as I should, I would know His power better and trust Him more implicitly. The reason why the answer to many a prayer of mine is not given, is simply because *the prayer* was never given, to begin with. The mountain is not removed, simply because I have been kneeling at the foot of *the wrong mountain.*

(27) "*For me and Thee.*"

What a partnership,—Christ and Co.! To think of Him as "the silent partner" in "the King's business"— furnishing all of the capital, "the wonderful Counsellor" (Is. 9 : 6), drawing upon infinite Wisdom, sure to succeed beyond any possibility of failure. But if we (He and I) are to be "workers together" (2 Cor. 6 : 1), I must enter also into the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3 : 10). To work with Him, I must learn to work like Him. He makes no misfit, but selects partners with due regard to fitness for the part to be performed. Where fish are to be caught, He sends the fisherman, not the publican. And where Matthew might have failed, Peter makes a great name.

But while my partner supplies the resources, He expects

me to develop them. As with Peter, so with me, this involves: (*a*) *reflection*, "What thinkest Thou?" (*b*) *obedience*, "Go"; (*c*) *skill*, "cast a hook"; (*d*) *despatch*, "take up the fish that first cometh up," (*e*) careful *attention*, "When thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel"; (*f*) *thoroughness*, "that take and give." Am I bringing to "the King's business" the qualities required?

Prayer:

O Lord, that I may know Thee and the power of Thy resurrection and the fellowship of Thy sufferings, being made conformable unto Thy death. Lead me to the mountain which Thou dost mean to remove. Teach me to do *Thy will*. O God, Thou are faithful who hast called me into the partnership of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1 : 9). Make me a true partner in Thy business. Qualify me for it. Help me to be always about my Father's business.

For Thy dear Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

MATTHEW 18.

Title :

"*Little Child*" (vs. 2, 4).

Thought :

Having set forth a child as best illustrating the condition of admission to the Kingdom (1–14), Jesus insists upon agreement among the children of the Kingdom (15–20), and emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, by the parable of the king's servants (21–35).

Truth :

(4) "*Whosoever shall humble himself . . . is the greatest.*"

True humility consists not so much in thinking meanly of one's self, as in *not thinking of one's self at all.* A little child is our Lord's ideal of the new man of the new kingdom. For who is so free from self-consciousness as a little child ? And this is what He means me to be.

(15) "*Sin against thee.*"

The law of Christ works both ways. It not only covers the case when I have done a wrong to my brother (Matt. 5 : 23), but, likewise in this case, when my brother has done a wrong to me. In either case, prayer is hindered until I do my part towards healing the breach. The one and only petition in the model prayer that calls for a footnote is, "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we* forgive" (Matt. 6 : 15).

(20) "*Where two or three are . . . there am I.*"

"Jesus is only satisfied when the doors are shut to the world and in a quiet place His friends meet to keep His commandments, whether it be in the shadow of a cathedral, or in some Puritan meeting-house, where the elements of the Sacrament are passed from hand to hand, or on the mountainside where Scotch covenanters keep the feast, or in the dreary catacombs, where early Christians showed forth the Death that they may to-morrow share, it is the same to Him who is above all rites, who lives for Love."

Prayer:

O Thou who didst Thyself become a little child, and who didst love to take the little ones in Thine arms, make me truly childlike. Develop in me every grace of childhood, faith and hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13), with true humility; keep me from self-consciousness. Make me really unselfish.

For Thine own Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

MATTHEW 19.

Title:

"*Eternal Life*" (v. 16).

Thought:

Jesus asserts the sacredness of marriage (1–12), blesses the little children (13–15), deals with the young Ruler (16–22) and gives the hundredfold promise (23–30).

Truth:

(9) "*Whosoever shall put away his wife . . . committeth adultery.*"

How much of the divorce law of our day would shrivel before the white-heat of the Righteousness of Christ. If the Law of the Christ were the laws of the land, the Augean stables of "modern society" would soon be cleaned out. And this law for society is the natural sequence to the law for the individual (5 : 28). Purity in the heart makes purity in the home and purity throughout the land. Make the fountain clean and the streams will be the same. But dredging the river-bed will not avail, if there is corruption at the source.

(12) "*Eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven's sake.*"

Occasions may arise when those that are married should be as though they were unmarried (1 Cor. 7 : 29). Marital rights should be subordinated to the demands of the Kingdom. To Uriah, war was such an occasion (2 Sam. 11 : 9–13). Paul in his nomad life as a missionary, deemed it

better not to marry (1 Cor. 7 : 26, 40). Whatever will count most for the Kingdom, it is for me "to seek" at any cost (Matt. 6 : 33).

(14) "*Suffer the little children . . . to come unto Me.*"

Christ cannot but attract the children. Since "heaven lies all about us in our infancy," the Lord from heaven naturally draws the little ones to Himself. And every Christlike man should do the same. If children are not attracted to me, I may well inquire into the cause of my unattractiveness. For if I do not attract them to myself, I may actually be keeping them away from Christ, however unwittingly.

(20) "*What lack I yet?*"

My chief lack is the lack of a sense of my lack. And when that lack is felt, I come to realize that all I lack is love, but, that *is* all, for lacking that, I lack all, since "the greatest . . . is love" (1 Cor. 13: 13). "What lack I yet?"

(21) "*If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell . . . give . . . come . . . follow . . . and thou shalt have.*"

Whatever comes between me and God must go. . . . Not until the vessel is emptied, can it be filled. While with the young Ruler it was money, with me it may be pride or personal preference or opinions, or reputation, but whatever it is, it must "go" before I can "have" and come and follow my Lord.

(29) "*A hundredfold.*"

Ten thousand per cent. guaranteed! What better investment could any one ask? And that is assured "for this life," while over and above that, is assured "life everlasting." Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wis-

dom and the knowledge of God! This is no mere sentimental, impractical promise, but one that relates to houses and lands and friends and family, now and here, no less than hereafter. What man may have more true, choice friends than the man whose travelling life takes him much from home? And have I not found it so? Yes, a thousand per cent. literally.

Prayer:

Lord, make me so pure in heart that I may have much in common with little children. Thou hast said that their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven (Matt. 18 : 10) and Thou hast also said, that the pure in heart shall see God (Matt. 5 : 8). Therefore, graciously grant me the heart-purity of the little child, so as always to see Thy face and ever to live the life of heaven on earth.

Through Jesus Christ my Lord, *Amen.*

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

MATTHEW 20.

Title:

"*The Last . . . First*" (v. 16).

Thought:

Jesus likens the Kingdom to a householder hiring workmen (1–16), again foretells His Crucifixion and Resurrection (17–19), corrects the ambition of the mother of James and John (20–28) and opens blind eyes, a second time (29–34).

Truth:

(14) "*It is My will.*"

This is enough for every loyal follower of the Lord. "God wills it," is the end of all doubt on any point. God makes no mistake. His will is best.

"Thou sweet beloved will of God,
My anchor ground, my fortress hill,
My spirit's silent sweet abode,
In Thee I hide me and am still.

"O will that willest good alone,
Lead Thou the way, Thou guidest best,
A little child I follow on
And, trusting, lean upon Thy breast.

"Thy beautiful sweet will, my God,
Holds fast in its sublime embrace
My captive will, a gladsome bird,
Prisoned in such a realm of grace."

(16) "*Last . . . first.*"

The Thibetan and Korean shall have just as good a

chance in the age-long, world-wide vineyard as the true Jew who was called out of Ur of the Chaldees in the very first hour of the day. In this sense, too, "a thousand years are as a day" (2 Pet. 3 : 8). *Time* does not count in the working out of the Kingdom whose hours are æons. What is a thousand years in the life of the Son of God or even of *a* Son of God?

(22) "*Ye know not what ye ask.*"

How many a prayer is uttered in ignorance and if answered in the affirmative, what a curse it would be to him who has asked it. Fortunately, God, while always answering the prayers of His children, reserves the right to answer either in the affirmative or negative, according to His infinite wisdom. Who would have it otherwise? For "we know not how to pray as we ought" (Rom. 8 : 26). But happily the Father has not left us alone in the infirmity of our ignorance. He has given us "another Helper." "The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints *according to the will of God*" (Rom. 8 : 27). Herein is the provision for our ignorance.

Prayer:

Lord, Thy will be done in me even as in heaven. Help me to know Thy will, that I may do it; help me to do it, that I may come to know it better. For I am very ignorant and oftentimes I ask what Thou knowest is not best for me. Make me willing to have my prayers answered in the negative, if Thou shouldest see that to be best.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

MATTHEW 21.

Title:

"*Hosanna*" (v. 9).

Thought:

The King enters the Capital (1–11) and the Temple (12–17); next morning, returning, He curses the fruitless fig-tree (18–22) and meets the challenge of the chief priests as to His authority, giving the illustration of the two sons (23–32) and the parable of the Householder seeking in vain for fruit (33–46).

Truth:

(2) "*Loose them and bring them unto Me.*" . . . (3) "*The Lord hath need of them.*"

Whatever is required to bring back the King, I must hasten to put at His disposal. My heart is His Temple, my will His royal Throne. Why am I so slow to bring the King to His own? Whether great or small, all things must be pressed into the service. "Every beast . . . is Mine" (Psalm 50: 10), He declares. And many of these are tied up so that they cannot be used. What forces are there in my life that need to be set free? All sorts of ties are to be loosened. The Lord who "has need" of even commonplace things, must be given right of way

> "Over our wills and affections,
> Freely surrendered and wholly Thine own."

(13) "*My house shall be called a House of Prayer.*"

Anything that hinders communion with God must go, whether it be money-making or pleasure-seeking, or whatever it be. If the spirit of commercialism or religious profession or any other form of the self-life be admitted, it will surely drive out prayer. "What manner of house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of My rest?" (Is. 66: 1). God is seeking a place to abide in human life, in my life. And only as a relation of mutual confidence and communion is established with God, within me, is the function of "my house" fulfilled.

(18) "*Leaves only.*"

Leaves have their use. They are the lungs of the tree, taking in moisture and sunshine. They afford shade. But the fruit-tree that has "only leaves" is living a lie. So is the man who makes a profession with no corresponding possession. Such was the Jewish nation, and Jesus condemned it, root and branch, with a withering curse. He could do this because His own life was so consistent, so fruitful, so prayerful. Is mine?

(22) "*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

There is only one qualification to this promise, and that is that the request be *according to the will of God.* There is absolutely no limitation to the possibilities put within the power of him who is in touch with the power of God. Undaunted by any difficulty, do I rely implicitly upon Him to remove the mountain who made the mountain?

(25) "*From heaven or from men?*"

This is the supreme test to be applied to everything in life: is it, in its origin and character, its motives and methods, divine or merely human, "from heaven or from men"? He who is born from above should be continually

dealing with the supernatural. Am I applying this principle in my life, continually?

(27) "*We . . . know not.*"

Agnosticism is a cowardly retreat from between the two horns of a dilemma, a short-cut by a back door out of the difficulty of facing the hard problems of life. It is the cutting of a knot which should be patiently untied, though it take time and toil to do it. To those who resort to such a subterfuge, Jesus inevitably replies, "Neither do I tell you." To those who are content to "know nothing," there is no revelation possible. Only those who "seek" may expect to "find," only to those who "knock," shall it be opened.

(42) "*The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner.*"

Here is "the Living Stone" (1 Pet. 2: 4), the Rock that followed the church in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10: 4), the Stone that was cut out of the side of the mountain (Dan. 2: 34), brought at length to the site of the Temple, where was to be begun the building of that "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2: 5) which is to fill the whole earth! And, lo, the builders rejected that Living Stone!

(43) "*The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*"

Loss is the penalty of disuse or abuse, whether in a nation or an individual. History has repeated this lesson again and again. Thus Great Britain lost the American colonies. And one after another, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, the French and the East India Company lost their hold on India, because of their short-sighted selfishness and grasping greed. This law applies no less to the in-

dividual. Am I producing the fruit of the Kingdom? That fruit is *Love* (Gal. 5 : 22).

Prayer:

Lord, help me to bring Thee in as king to every department of my life. Enable me to release every force and put it at Thy disposal. Let me not be barren or unfruitful, lest I lose the power to serve Thee.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

MATTHEW 22.

Title:

"*Question*" (vs. 35, 41).

Thought:

Having likened the Kingdom to a King who made a marriage feast for His Son (1–14), He is assailed with questions: from the Herodians as to paying tax, duty to the state (15–22), the Sadducees as to marriage relations after death, family ties (23–33), the Pharisees, as to "the great commandment," duties of religion (34–40), and Jesus, having given an unanswerable answer to each, puts to them the puzzling problem as to whose Son the Christ is (41–46).

Truth:

(12) "*Friend.*"

Jesus is indeed "the friend of sinners." Even the man who rejects the wedding-robe is still a "friend"; likewise the man who is dissatisfied with his pay (20: 13) and even the one who betrays the Saviour with a kiss (26: 50), is still called "friend." And who is so faithful to the faults of his friends? The one who complains about his pay is plainly told that his eye is "evil" (20: 15); to one who is in the innermost circle, He says, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (16: 23).

(12) "*How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?*"

(Literally "not endued with the enduement of the feast" or "not covered with the covering provided for the feast.") There was one man, particularly, whom the Master may have had in mind. For three years and more this man had been in the circle of the Twelve, yet not of it. He had not "the enduement." To Judas, sooner or later, must come the inevitable separation. And at last he went out and "it was night" (John 13 : 30). To be excluded forever from the presence of Jesus, that were "outer darkness," indeed. And there to this day, that man continues his "weeping and gnashing of teeth." But such must be the end of every one who refuses to be "clothed with the garments of salvation . . . covered with the robe of righteousness" (Is. 61 : 10). Nor is there any injustice, for not the guest but the host provides the robe, and they only are excluded who could wear it, but would not. Am I clad in the Robe of His Righteousness (Is. 61 : 10), "the garment of praise" (Is. 61 : 3), "white garments" (Eccl. 9 : 8), "beautiful garments"? (Is. 52 : 1.)

(21) "*Render unto God the things that are God's.*"

God's things, what does that *not* include? "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1 : 1). And the whole includes every part. Among other things, I must present my body a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12 : 1); that is "reasonable." And the body includes mind and spirit, as well as the physical powers. The money that I happen to have, too, is His and I only hold it in trust for Him. Am I really rendering "unto God the things that are God's"?

(29) "*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.*"

All error consists in departing from divine lines, and as these are clearly laid down in the Scriptures, the only safe way is to "search the Scriptures" for the things that are therein revealed. And in doing so, I have "Another Helper," who has promised to "guide me into the whole Truth" (John 16 : 13); hence I need not err.

(38) "*The great and first commandment.*"

To get at the "chief point" (Heb. 8 : 1), one must think through all that is merely accidental into that which is really essential, the very kernel of the matter. And that one indispensable thing is Love. There is only one way to live at high-tide and that is to love—to deny self indeed, to take up the cross, not to count one's own life dear unto one's self, to lose one's self in thinking of the needs of others. If a man cannot show that he thus loves his brother, he cannot claim to truly love God at all. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Gal. 5 : 14). Who that truly loves his neighbour will kill or rob or do anything else to harm him? Who that loves God, will have "other gods" or worship idols or otherwise sin against Him?

> "Us with no other gospel thou ensnarest,
> Fiend from beneath or angel from above;
> Knowing one thing the sacredest and fairest,
> Knowing there is not anything but Love."

(41) "*Jesus asked them a question.*"

Sooner or later Jesus will put questions to all. He is to conduct the final examination, and well will it be then for those who have come unto Him to learn in the school of Christ. He began early, "in the temple hearing and asking questions" (Luke 2 : 46). None who have met His search-light questions have ever been able to get away from

them. To Peter, He put the test question, "Lovest thou Me?" What is He asking me?

Prayer:

O Thou, the Friend of sinners, bring me into Thy banqueting house and spread over me Thy canopy of Love (Song of Sol. 2: 4). Be Thou still my faithful friend, reproving my faults, encouraging my faith. Enable me to be true to every relation of life, doing my duty to the state, faithful to my family, obeying God's commands, hiding Thy Word in my heart.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

MATTHEW 23.

Title:

"*Woe*" (vs. 13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 29).

Thought:

After openly warning the people against Pharisaic inconsistency (1–12), Jesus utters a series of seven woes concerning (*a*) shutting the Kingdom, (*b*) proselytizing, (*c*) swearing, (*d*) tithing, (*e*) cleansing the outside only, (*f*) covering up corruption, (*g*) disavowing responsibility (13–36); then He utters a lamentation over Jerusalem (37–39).

Truth:

(8) "*One is your Teacher* (*8*), *Father* (*9*), *Master* (*10*)."

There is one God and Jesus is His prophet. If Jesus were recognized as the one and only teacher and His word the final authority on every point, there would be an end to sectarianism and schism. If God were everywhere known and honoured as "the only living and true God," there would be an end to all polytheism and idolatry. "And this is eternal life, to know Thee, the only living and true God and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17 : 3).

(27) "*Outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of . . . all uncleanness.*"

The vials of His wrath are reserved for those who ap-

pear other than they really are. He cannot abide humbug. Hypocrisy withers before His breath. Woe to the hypocrite when Jesus draws near! He insists upon honesty, straightforwardness, reality. All sham shall be shamed away by His presence. "And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6: 15–17).

(30) "*Upon this generation.*"

If men will not carry out God's will *within this generation*, it is perfectly possible for God to do so, and He will undoubtedly do it without us, but the failure will necessarily entail a fearful penalty "upon this generation." Am I incurring any part of the "woe" here pronounced?

Prayer:

Lord, that I may know Thee and the power of Thy resurrection and the fellowship of Thy sufferings (Phil 3: 10). Cleanse me thoroughly—through and through—from sin. Save me from hypocrisy. Enable me to shun all that is false in myself and to speak out against it in others wherever and whenever I find it. So may I not incur "woe" upon myself, and may I do my part to prevent the coming of it "upon this generation." Help me to weep with Thee when Thy people know not the day of their visitation and are unwilling in the day of Thy power (Psalm 110: 3).

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

THIRTIETH DAY

MATTHEW 24.

Title:

"*Tribulation*" (vs. 9, 20, 29).

Thought:

Predicting the overthrow of the Temple (1–2), Jesus discusses the signs of the end of the age (3–14) and warns His disciples to be on their guard (15–28) watching for His coming (29–31), and He illustrates, by the fig-tree, the need of watchfulness (32–44), appealing finally for faithfulness and wisdom in every servant of His (45–51).

Truth:

(14) "*This Gospel . . . shall be preached in the whole world . . . and then shall the end come.*"

But one condition is yet unfulfilled. There have already been many false Christs, and wars and rumours of war, famine and earthquakes and defections from the faith; it only remains now that "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness unto all the nations, and then shall the end come." And what is there to hinder this from being done *within this generation?* We have the Master's command, His message, the motive, the men, the money. The whole earth is wide open. Rapid transit and quick communication are now secured. Why longer delay the end by our disobedience? Shall I not at least do my part, no matter what others may do or fail to do?

(33) "*He is nigh, even at the doors.*"

Do I believe it? Am I living as though Christ might come at any moment? Is this "blessed hope" (Titus 2 : 13) affecting my conduct, shaping my character, stimulating my service, inspiring my faith, sustaining my hope and quickening my love for all about me, the unlovely as well as the lovable? If not, why not?

> "What can we do o'er whom the unbeholden
> Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope;
> What but look sunward and with faces golden
> Speak to each other softly of a hope?"

(36) "*Not even the Son.*"

What a state-secret, that the Father should keep it from even His "only begotten and well-beloved Son," His bosom companion, His "fellow"! (Zech. 13 : 7). And if even the Son Himself does not know when He is to come, why then should I presume to pry into His secret counsels and try to determine the day or the hour? Enough to know that the event is imminent and to live in constant expectation of His return "in like manner as He went away" (Acts 1 : 11). Is this my constant attitude?

(45) "*To give them their food.*"

The feeding of His sheep and lambs (John 21 : 15–17) is a supreme test of the faithfulness of the follower of "the chief shepherd" (1 Pet. 5 : 4). Watching is not idle waiting. It is work. It is unceasing, unselfish service. He who is looking for "the end" will be taken up with two objects, mainly, viz.: "his Lord" and "his household."

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to be really looking for Thee, all the while. Let me not pry into secrets that are not for me to

know. I do not ask to know "times or seasons which the Father has set within His own authority" (Acts 1 : 7). Help me to do my utmost to prepare the way for Thy return, to give the gospel to the whole world and to feed Thy sheep and lambs.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

MATTHEW 25.

Title:

"*Throne*" (v. 31).

Thought:

Referring still to the King's coming again, the Lord likens the Kingdom to Ten Virgins (1–13), to a man committing his estate to stewards (14–30), then pictures the Judgment-Seat, in the parable of the sheep and the goats (31–46).

Truth:

(6) "*Behold the Bridegroom.*"

Whatever the uncertainty as to the hour, there is one point upon which there seems to be no doubt whatever: the cry of His Coming will sound *in the night.* It will be *dark.* Those who are watching and waiting will need oil. And those who are without that will be foolish indeed. Am I supplied with "oil"? Am I among those who are watching?

(8) "*Lamps going out.*"

A little "oil" is not enough to last through the dark night. What is needed is a reserve of power for the time of need. The command to me and to all is to "be *filled* with the Spirit" (Eph. 5: 18). Zechariah found the secret of an unfailing supply, when he learned the connection between the glowing lamps and the olive trees

(Zech. 4), trees ever growing, oil ever flowing, lamps ever glowing! Have I this source of supply?

(14) "*To each according to his several ability.*"

Talent is not "ability," but the bestowal of it is determined by ability. The Lord gives to every one just as much as he is able to use to advantage. "Ability" is subjective, talents objective, but both are God-given. "Ye shall receive *ability* (or power) when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1 : 8). And "your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them who *ask* Him" (Luke 11 : 13). Hence I am responsible if I fail to obtain the "power," upon which depends what talents can be bestowed on me.

(23) "*Good and faithful.*"

It is not enough to be good. I must, likewise, do good. I must do my best as well as be the best I possibly can. And to undertake only so much as I can do well, and be at my best, that is what I need to know. Christian service is not a matter of quantity, but of quality. The two-talent man receives the same degree at the Lord's hands, as the ten-talent man, but each doubles what is committed to him.

(40) "*Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me.*"

"Even these"—the hungry, or athirst, or stranger or naked, or sick—those in need are the ones with whom Jesus doth most love to identify Himself. Do I? Here is the place for me to begin to do good. Let me look about and see where the need is greatest and then help to help the needy. Thus and thus only can I enter into "the joy of my Lord." I may find other joy otherwise, but not the Lord's own genuine joy. And that is what I want.

(45) "*Did it not.*"

Doing nothing is enough to bring condemnation. Sins of *omission* may be as fatal as those committed. It is not only wrong to do wrong, but it is also wrong not to do right. Am I doing my duty towards the poor and needy round about me?

Prayer:

O Thou blessed Bridegroom, make me a son of oil (Zech. 4: 14). Anoint me with "the oil of gladness" (Heb. 1: 9). Fill me with "the oil of joy" (Is. 61: 3). Help me to be both "good and faithful," and, while Thou dost delay Thy return, enable me to watch. Let me not come under the condemnation of not having done everything that Thou dost expect me to do.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

THIRTY-SECOND DAY

MATTHEW 26: 1–29.

Title:

"*The Cup*" (vs. 27, 39).

Thought:

The authorities take counsel (1–5), Mary anoints Jesus (6–13), Judas bargains to betray Him (14–16), the disciples prepare for the Passover (17–19), during which Jesus exposes Judas (20–25), after which He institutes the Lord's Supper (26–29).

Truth:

(7) "*An alabaster flask of exceeding precious ointment.*"

No doubt it was precious in that it had cost much money. And there are those who would have objected to our Lord receiving it, on the ground that it was "tainted money." But He seems to have considered that somehow the taint had been removed. He seems to take into account not so much the method by which the money was acquired, as the motive wherewith it was given. And a like principle may still be safely applied.

(8) "*This waste.*"

That is not lost which is expended on Christ. In His eyes, it was "a good work," an anointing for burial. How utterly different does the same act appear according to different standards? Whatever I expend upon my Lord, if He but count it "good work," no matter though

others pronounce it "waste," will prove a good investment indeed.

(12) "*She did it to prepare Me for burial.*"

What this woman brought may have weighed less, but it counted for more than the hundred weight of myrrh and aloes which rich men brought (John 19: 39). For she came "aforehand," but they when it was too late for any word of commendation from Christ. Let me not postpone what I do for my Lord.

(25) "*Is it I, Rabbi?*"

"Is it I, *Lord?*" (v. 22) asked all the others. "Is it I, *Rabbi?*" asked Judas. If Jesus is no more than "Teacher" to me, I am not likely to find His authority supreme in my life. He who was "Lord" to John (John 13: 25) and "My Lord and my God" to Thomas (John 20: 28), is only "Rabbi" to Judas. Herein lies the key to the issues of life with these men. The supreme life-choice is as to who is to have the supremacy and really rule the life. Is Jesus "Rabbi" or "Lord"?

Prayer:

O Thou who dost reckon the value of what is given Thee by the love it represents, help me to give Thee what really costs. Forbid that I should give Thee only what I can spare. Teach me to give until it hurts and then to give until it does not hurt. Help me not to delay until it is too late, but to be aforehand with my giving. Be Thou not merely a teacher to me, but, likewise, my Lord.

For Thy Name's sake, *Amen.*

THIRTY-THIRD DAY

MATTHEW 26: 30–75.

Title:

"*The Cup*" (vs. 27, 39).

Thought:

Jesus repairs to the Garden (30), forewarns Peter (31–35), Himself proceeds to pray and the disciples to sleep (36–46); He is arrested (47–56), and taken to the house of Caiaphas and examined (57–68), where Peter denies Him (69–75).

Truth:

(39) "*He went forward a little and fell on His face and prayed.*"

In the prayer-life there are degrees. It is in prayer that the difference between the Master and His disciples and between one disciple and another does most appear. Some disciples go with Jesus into Gethsemane, others—and they are fewer—go on with Him into a further fellowship, in the travail of His soul, but even beyond the furthest outpost, Jesus Himself goes "forward a little." How far have I gone? Do I know anything at all of the Gethsemane experience? Am I in the closer communion of those whom He invites with Him into the inner circle?

(39) "*Thy will be done.*"

"Thy will be done" is the high-water mark of Christian experience and attainment, the "hall mark" of all sterling character, the very essence of all true prayer. It

is the sum and substance of the paper set for the final examination in the School of Life. Oh, to learn it well and early, as Jesus did, who said "I delight to do Thy will" (Ps. 40: 8); "He that doeth the will of the Father" in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom (Matt. 7: 21); "Whosoever shall do the will of God," the same is Jesus' brother (Mark 3: 35); "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7: 17). "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2: 17).

(41) "*Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*"

It is one of the petitions which the Lord put into the model prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." While He has provided for the contingency in case one gets into temptation and needs to be delivered from the Evil One, yet our Lord's plan would effectually obviate all need for that. He first furnishes the "ounce of prevention," and that is worth a pound of cure.

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to pray, even as Thou didst teach Thy disciples on that last night when Thou wast betrayed. Lead me "a little forward" in my prayer life. Help me by prayer to prepare for the hour of temptation and trial. "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin." And, whatever may come, may I ever trustfully say, "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God."

For the sake of Thy dear Name, *Amen.*

THIRTY-FOURTH DAY

MATTHEW *27.*

Title:

"*The Veil*" (v. 51).

Thought:

Judas' remorse and suicide (1–10), Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate (11–31), was crucified (32–44), dead (45–56) and buried (57–66).

Truth:

(5) "*He went away and hanged himself.*"

The sorrow of Peter worked repentance, but the sorrow of Judas worked death (2 Cor. 7 : 10). The latter brought only remorse and vain regret; the former "earnest care . . . clearing of self . . . indignation . . . fear . . . longing . . . zeal . . . avenging" (2 Cor. 7 : 11). Of which word is my sorrow?

(12–14) "*Accused . . . He answered nothing, . . . no answer, not even a word.*"

Jesus is now getting the blessing which He promised to others, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Matt. 5 : 11). Is there any severer test than to be falsely accused? Not to revile when I am reviled, but to bear the false accusation in silence, that is "golden" indeed! No wonder that the Governor wondered when Jesus showed *such* self-repression! Have I learned to follow Jesus in this respect? "When your good

is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your tastes offended, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed and you take it all in patient and loving silence, that is victory!" Is this victory mine? Have I learned to suffer in silence and hold my peace?

(22) "*What, then, shall I do with Jesus?*"

Jesus cannot be ignored. He may be accepted or rejected. He may be crowned or crucified. But He cannot be let severely alone. He crosses every man's path. I must decide what my attitude to Him is to be. The choice is between Christ and Barabbas—between the Anointed and the Robber. "What, then, shall I do with Jesus?" By and by, the tables will be turned. The question then will be, What will Jesus do with me? And the answer to this question will then depend upon my answer now to the other. What shall the answer be? "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24: 15). Mary chose "that good part" and the Master commended her choice (Luke 10: 42). Paul could say, "I know Him whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1: 12).

(42) "*Himself, He cannot save.*"

It is utterly impossible for Him who denies Himself to save Himself. Herein does a son of God differ from a mere son of Adam. With the latter the first law of nature is self-preservation, with the former the law of the divine nature is self-denial. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16: 25). He who is born but once, shall die twice, but he who is born twice, can die but once for all. "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 28). So Paul counted not his life of any account unto himself (Acts 20: 24), for he was willing "also to die" for the name of the

Lord Jesus. Can I afford to save myself? "That I may know Him," I must come to know "the fellowship of His suffering" (Phil. 3 : 10).

Prayer:

Lord, that I may know "the fellowship of Thy sufferings" (Phil. 3 : 10), that I may learn to suffer wrongfully and hold my peace. Teach me to take up my cross daily and follow Thee. Save me from losing my life by trying to save it. Grant unto me the victory that overcometh the world, even faith in Thee (1 John 5 : 4), who art the author and the perfecter of faith (Heb. 12 : 2).

To the glory of Thy Name, *Amen.*

THIRTY-FIFTH DAY

MATTHEW 28.

Title :

"*All*" (vs. 18, 19, 20).

Thought :

Jesus arises from the dead (1–10), the council devises a theory to account for His disappearance (11–15) and the Lord meets His disciples in Galilee and gives the Great Commission (16–20).

Truth :

(7) "*Go quickly . . . and lo, He goeth before you.*"

I never can get ahead of the Leader. If I obey His "marching orders," I will always find Him going before me, making a way through all doubts and difficulties and dangers. And since He is ever ahead, His "Go" ever becomes a "Come." And the message of the resurrection is an urgent message, "Go quickly." Oh, marvellous patience of Jesus, to anticipate all the disobedience and delay of His followers, and yet to make the coming of the Kingdom depend upon these same dilatory disciples !

(7) "*He is risen.*"

To hear that announcement for the first time, who can imagine the effect ? It is without a precedent in all the world's history. It reverberates like a peal of thunder, rolling on through the centuries and around the whole wide world ! "He is risen," and with Him arises the world's

one hope of redemption. "He is risen," and herein lies my own hope of the new Life. Let me, then, arise to "seek the things that are above" (Col. 3 : 1).

(18–20) "*All authority . . . all nations . . . all things . . . all the days.*"

Oh, the height and breadth, the depth and length of God's plan for the redemption of the world! It embraces all space and all time. It covers both heaven and earth. And in this four-square frame is set this imperative command, "*Go ye.*" All is made to depend upon the faithfulness of His followers. And what a responsibility this entails upon me! For it is only as I know, that I can do His will (John 13 : 17); and this includes more than any university course. To know His "authority," necessitates a knowledge of God; to know "all the nations," embraces geography and history, ethnology and languages; to know "all things" that Christ commanded, includes an understanding of the Scriptures; to know "all the days," is to understand "the signs of the times." Such knowledge is high, and, if I am to attain unto even a small part of it, I must set myself to learn without delay.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to follow Thee as Thou, in Thy risen life, art leading me on to have a part with Thee in Thy far-reaching plans for the whole wide world. "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever, *Amen.*"

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